

commonweal

Clifford Hackett
EUROPE ADRIFT

Richard Wightman Fox
MASS MODERNISM

\$1.25

JUNE 15, 1984



No roadblocks to death

GORDON L. BOWEN

The quiet strength of liberation theology

CHRISTINE GUDORF

Nicaragua & El Salvador

THE EDITORS

Warning: This issue contains articles on Latin America.
The Surgeon General has determined that reading
them may be dangerous to your tranquility.

Gutiérrez & Ratzinger

FRANCIS SCHÜSSLER-FIORENZA

Sinking into homelessness

MARJORIE HOPE & JAMES YOUNG

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Correspondence

An 'Open Response'

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: I hope you will consider publishing this "Open Response" to the "Open Letter" written by Marie Winn [March 9] on the White House luncheon with President Reagan to discuss families.

Dear Ms. Winn:

Your "open letter" on the recent luncheon you attended with the president was wrong in three ways.

First, the stated purpose of the luncheon was the real purpose, namely to give the president and his staff the benefit of the opinions of people with different perspectives, and to do so in an informal, non-political atmosphere. That is why it was expressly off-the-record (as we said twice). You certainly need not apologize, as you say, for the fact that you spoke "sharply" to the president at lunch; candor was what we requested. Writing for publication is another matter.

Especially it is another matter when many of your recollections are so lamentably erroneous. Maybe you had not planned ahead of time to write an article about your off-the-record luncheon and did not take notes. Or maybe you just do not take good notes. Either way, the result is regrettable, since your article disparaged the credentials of the other guests without, apparently, knowing much about them. "James Dobson," for example, described by you as a man who "runs a network of radio stations" is Dr. James Dobson, who does not own any radio stations. He is a child psychologist, author of several books on families, author of *Family* newsletter, and main commentator on the "Focus on the Family" program carried each week over 460 radio stations. (Did the word "radio" throw you off?) Mr. Ernest Green of the NAACP, for another example, was invited not because he is a partner in a Washington consulting firm, but because he is helping to organize a forthcoming Black Family Summit.

But, finally, how could you spend the

morning with White House and administration officials, listening and talking (your supposed speaking limit of three minutes was only the suggested length for an opening comment to the president over lunch), and totally misconstrue, forget, or ignore the programs being developed to strengthen the American family? When you say, for instance, that I must have been distressed by Vance Packard's suggestion of subsidies to families, you fail to note my own comments earlier on tax and financial discrimination against families with children or similar comments by your fellow guests Michael Novak and Connaught Marshner (who is editor of *Family Policy Insights*, which you did not mention, as well as being a former Reagan campaign adviser, which you did). Their ideas, and Packard's, are in fact, receiving serious study here.

Free and honest dialogue is essential if people of varied views are to understand each other on a subject like families where misunderstandings even on definitions are likely. Several of us had a spirited and useful discussion after lunch, which meeting you missed, because, as you noted sarcastically, you "had to rush off." Instead of dialogue, all we got from you, alas, was an "Open Letter" and a closed mind.

BRUCE CHAPMAN

Deputy Assistant to the President
Director of the Office of Planning
and Evaluation at the White House

The author replies

1. Although Mr. Chapman finds me mistaken in my identification of one guest at the president's luncheon and amplifies the credentials of two others, I don't think he addresses the point I made, namely that if this had been intended as a serious discussion occupying the valuable time of the nation's president and his closest advisers, "you might have assembled a more significant group of child and family experts than the curious collection you invited to the White House."

2. Mr. Chapman is apparently astonished that the pre-luncheon briefing left me underwhelmed with all that the administration is doing on behalf of families. ("How could you spend the

morning . . .?") I am no more impressed by Mr. Chapman's general references here to "programs being developed" (he does not mention programs that have been eliminated) and "ideas . . . receiving serious study."

3. Mr. Chapman is simply mistaken in assuming that I knew the White House luncheon was "off the record." Since I was invited by telephone on the day before the event, evidently to replace someone who couldn't come, I never received the written material stating limitations on writing for publication that was sent out to the other participants. I am, however, happy to belatedly learn that the luncheon was officially designated "off the record." This explains the puzzling impunity with which the president told so many imprudent anecdotes in the presence of journalists.

MARIE WINN

'Cry with the mother'

Minneapolis, Minn.

To the Editors: Oh, Mary Studer Shea ["Correspondence," April 6, 1984,] blessed are you among the women and men who have written reams on the woman pregnant. You painted her heart for me.

JAMES EGAN, S.J.

Between hawks & doves

New York

To the Editors: Amen to Mary Studer Shea's eloquent letter of April 6, which
(Continued on page 382)

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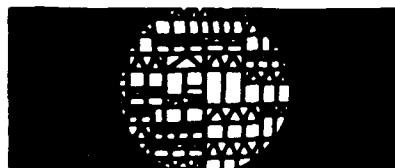
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RETURN TO CENTRAL AMERICA

IT HAS BEEN only six weeks since we last wrote about Central America. In the intervening time, the newly elected president of El Salvador, José Napoleón Duarte, visited Washington and persuaded Congress to gamble with another increase in aid to El Salvador. He was assisted in his quest by the long-blocked trial, and swift conviction, of five national guardsmen for the "aggravated homicide" in 1980 of the four American church women. Congress continued to balk, however, at a further \$21 million dollop of aid for the Nicaraguan *contras*. The conflict between the Sandinistas and the Catholic hierarchy in Nicaragua took another turn for the worse. The CIA was again seen as trying to force the ex-Sandinista Eden Pastora to abandon his objections to joining a united front of *contras* including former Somoza henchmen. Unknown parties tried to blow Pastora up at a press conference, killing seven and putting the insurgent leader out of action in Venezuela. George Shultz made a surprise visit to Managua, setting off rumors of a renewed U.S. interest in negotiating a settlement but provoking prompt denials from Washington that anything had changed.

It is true that the epicenter for the latest tremors of world war is not south of the American border but in the Persian Gulf. And it is true that the impact of the U.S. prime rate on third-world debt may cause more suffering than all the death squads and guerrillas in Central America. Yet Central America occupies our attention for special reasons. It is an area where the historical presence of the United States has been great. It is an area that tests not only our will, as the administration seems to think, but also our intelligence and our self-understanding. The fundamental question facing the U.S. in Central America concerns not what that region should be, but what kind of a country the U.S. should be. And what is true for the U.S., furthermore, is doubly true for the Catholic church.

Concentrating on Central America is also urgent because our approach toward the region is on the verge of sinking irretrievably into double-think. Washington righteously accuses the Salvadoran guerrillas of doing things, e.g., economic sabotage, that the U.S. is paying the *contras* to do in Nicaragua. Indeed, not long ago, stung by events in the Middle East, the U.S. issued a major denunciation of something called "state-sponsored terrorism"; but for Nicaragua — unless the numerous reports of *contra* depredations against civilians are completely false — this is precisely what the administration has been asking Congress to fund. After crowing about El Salvador's free elections, the administration was compelled to admit that we had secretly spent \$1.4 million to influence the outcome. (Jesse Helms's complaints on behalf of Robert D'Aubuisson provoked the usual spate of half-lies as in the case of the mining incident. The pertinent congressional committees had apparently been informed as procedure required, however; and that plus the general satisfaction at Duarte's victory seems to have dampened any congressional

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In keeping with *Commonweal's* usual summer schedule, only one issue will be published each month during July and August. The next issue will be dated July 13.

desire to probe further about the CIA's electioneering.) If the secret funding undermines the claims about a democratically elected president in El Salvador, in Nicaragua the CIA seems determined to undermine what credibility Eden Pastora retains as a Sandinista opponent with an heroic anti-Somoza record by pressuring him to join hands with the *somocista* guardsmen among the *contras* in Honduras. We are nearing the point when the only thing one will feel confident believing about Central America is the worst.

All this makes it vitally important to say as clearly as possible what we know about Central America — and also admit what we don't know. Start with Nicaragua:

The Nicaraguan revolution is now five years old. At five, revolutions are frequently far more fixed in their ways than this one. The French had run through a couple of constitutions, executed their king, gone to war, nationalized the church and installed the goddess of Reason, undergone civil war, bled through the terror, and were entering a period of Thermidorean reaction. The Russians had abolished first monarchy and then parliamentary liberalism, signed away national territory, suffered foreign invasion and famine, conducted a brutal civil war, crushed rebellions of formerly loyal workers, peasants, and servicemen, and veered through a couple of economic systems. In a much shorter span yet, Cuba moved firmly into the Soviet camp — and Soviet economic dependency. Compared to all these experiences, the Nicaraguan situation remains strikingly fluid. Nicaragua is by no means the totalitarian nation that its fierce critics in Washington would insist.

On the other hand, Nicaragua is far from the brave new seedbed of social justice that its fervent defenders, many of them church people, would portray. This is a vexing point. So many people in the church in Central America have borne up under the cruelest persecution, have prayed, sacrificed, and died on behalf of those societies' victims, that one hesitates to counter their hopes or question their political witness. But insofar as that hope and witness has been identified closely with the Sandinista-led revolution, it seems to us misplaced.

This point, we said, is vexing. It is vexing because different judgments on the Nicaraguan case often appear to rest very little on disagreements about the facts. Very roughly speaking, much of the basic history of this half decade can be agreed upon: the Sandinista breakthrough in attempting to provide health and literacy programs; their mixed and increasingly faltering record in economic policy; their censorship of the media; their attempt to mobilize the entire population in a network of Sandinista associations, from neighborhood groups to the military; their alignment with the Soviet bloc and the military buildup; the threat of U.S.-backed insurgency and invasion; the still undetermined character of their promised elections. What is not agreed upon is the interpretation to be

given these developments. Indeed, frequently the same phenomena are given entirely different readings. In the eyes of some, the neighborhood Sandinista Defense Committee or the "meet-the-people" meetings with Sandinista leaders recall barn raisings and New England town meetings. For others, they cast the shadow of Big Brother, regimentation, and manipulation. The difference seems to arise from the larger ideological and historical framework in which the revolution is viewed.

One of the sticking points in this clash of frameworks is the Marxism-Leninism of the Sandinista *comandantes*. Does it matter? If one were to judge by the attitude of many religious defenders of the Sandinistas, it does not. If they advert to this Marxism-Leninism at all, it is usually in passing or to warn (sometimes with justification) against America's reflexive anti-Communism.

To us, on the other hand, the Marxism-Leninism of the Sandinista leaders matters a great deal. It is an outlook they have openly acknowledged. In its variant forms (Soviet, Cuban, Chinese), it guided and sustained them through long and perilous years of guerrilla struggle. It is a powerful view assuring the Sandinistas that a tiny core of active revolutionaries who understand and act upon the laws of history may justly claim to rule in the name of the oppressed. It also instructs them that such rule must be defended without quarter, that "bourgeois" liberties are masks for class domination, and that real change will not be achieved unless the means of communications and the groupings of society at every level are mobilized in service of the party's goals. Since the interests of the party, the oppressed, and society itself are essentially the same, the grounds for providing institutional space so that a variety of interests might organize and clash peacefully are at most tactical and temporary. The Marxism-Leninism of the Sandinistas is not only a powerful doctrine; it has been the organizing thread of their socialization as political leaders. It has given them rhetoric, loyalties, allies, and models — drawing, to a large extent, on the Soviet and Cuban views of the world.



"Our mission will be subversion, sabotage, assassination, and anything else we can think of to preserve democracy in Central America."

Going on 60

From Commonwealth twenty-five years ago: "It may be foolhardy, but I am going to keep at my one-man crusade for relating theology to modern problems. . . . I am asking . . . for latterday Summas which will bring the truths of faith alive for modern man. That cannot be done, it seems to me, until these truths are related to the other concerns, political, scientific, professional, artistic and moral, which engross us.

" . . . Today, theology, in order to make any impression, must begin by showing that religion is relevant to man's other concerns. For it is not until a man is convinced that the teachings of the faith are relevant that he begins to worry about whether or not they are true."

—John Cogley, "Theology for Everyone"
June 12, 1959

As long as one refuses to take the Sandinistas' Marxist-Leninist convictions seriously, there is no explanation for many of their actions. They rushed to embrace Soviet foreign policy on questions like Poland, Afghanistan, and Kampuchea at a time when the Carter administration was trying to overcome congressional opposition to Nicaraguan assistance. From the first, they expected to rely on Moscow for arms and aid — even to Moscow's embarrassment. Their swift relegation of non-Sandinista forces to the margins of political life, the imposition of censorship, the organization of the country not in *state* but *party* structures, the indoctrination of young people — it is simply straining the evidence to adjudge all these and many other distressing developments as merely reactions to U.S. hostility. They are, for the *comandantes*, not regrettable but necessary aberrations; they are at the heart of their concept of what a real revolution is about.

It is possible to make too much of this. The Sandinista leaders have clearly differed among themselves. Their doctrine and experience still leave room for a degree of pragmatism, flexibility, invention. Seldom do beliefs determine everything — as Christians know very well. Other forces, from nationalism to personal ambition, will play their parts in Managua as elsewhere. Marxism-Leninism undergoes striking local transformations. Regimes that equally adhere to it have nonetheless gone to war with one another.

But the core beliefs of the Sandinista leadership cannot be ignored either. They are justification enough for making at least one framework for the evaluation of events in Nicaragua the unhappy history of Eastern Europe, the poor record of the Soviet model in producing even material well-being, the descent to the Gulag in Russia itself. This history, as well as the history of Sandino, the U.S. Marines, and Somoza, is now background against which Nicaragua must be viewed. Czeslaw Milosz and Milan Kundera now become part of the litera-

ture of Latin America, with Pablo Neruda and Gabriel García Márquez. To ignore this is to look at history with one eye closed.

NONE OF THIS is meant to suggest a condemnation of what has transpired in Nicaragua as all-embracing as the enthusiasm of some Sandinista supporters. In its anti-oligarchical radicalism and its legitimation of the needs of the poor, the Nicaraguan revolution has carved a kind of benchmark into Central American history. The French Revolution ended in Napoleon, but it also established a new starting point for democratic struggles in Europe. In that sense, the Nicaraguan revolution is larger than the Sandinista one. The two are far from working out their overlapping and conflicting impulses.

Americans, liberals as much as conservatives, are in the bad habit of assuming that history is all a pre-established progress toward constitutional democracy, separation of powers, and the two-party system. Only malign and unnatural interventions make the drama deviate from the existing script, and if they are quickly countered, everything will get back on track. In fact, history — and revolutions — are never so neat. It is worth remembering that Calvin Coolidge ordered the Marines into Nicaragua on the grounds of protecting it from the "Bolshevism" of Mexico — the Mexico we now want to protect from the Communism of Nicaragua.

It is facts like these that lead us to argue for a carefully limited view of what are truly vital U.S. interests in Latin America ["Central America: the Way Out," May 4], and therefore more flexibility in trying to encourage rather than compel. The problem for the church in Nicaragua is more complicated, however. It cannot withdraw. It would be unwise to set itself frontally against Nicaraguan national feeling. It must not deny the new benchmark of social equality that the revolution has established at least in principle. And yet it has real reason to fear penetration and absorption by Sandinista ideology and to resist being caught up in national mobilization. From afar, the politics of the Nicaraguan bishops appear clumsy and lurching; their specific objectives seem obscure. But their basic desire to assert the force of the church as an independent reality, as long as political space remains for such assertion, is understandable. The tendency of the "people's church" to back the regime in a virtually unqualified fashion does not appear any more promising. But this is an area where we frankly admit our uncertainty and lack of good information. American Catholics would be wise not to leap to conclusions about the divisions within the Nicaraguan church.

THE SITUATION IN El Salvador is somewhat the reverse of the one of Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, a party with a totalitarian outlook heads a regime that is not, for now, totalitarian. In El Salvador, a newly elected moderate democrat heads a regime that remains, for now, immoderately anti-democratic. If the Sandinistas' admirers tend to treat the *comandantes'* Marxism-Leninism as peripheral, the Reagan administration does the same with the fiercely, even murderously, anti-democratic convictions of the circles that still retain effective

power in El Salvador. The death squads and what they represent ideologically are not elements outside the government, against which the "forces of democracy," as the administration has termed the recipients of U.S. support in El Salvador, are pitted. They are entrenched within the government, the military, and the ruling class. Expecting these forces to eliminate repression and corruption and to become democratically accountable through the distribution of power is expecting a form of self-amputation. No one undergoes such a procedure unless the alternative is worse.

Unfortunately, even as American illusions about the Salvadoran establishment are dissipated by better information, our knowledge of the guerrilla opposition remains hazy. It shares the philosophy of the Sandinistas; it does not enjoy the national unity that the Sandinistas rallied against Somoza. It has, however, offered openings for negotiating the institutionalized guarantees that might allow the insurgent forces to compete for power in the normal political ways.

Whether President Duarte gets this or that much American aid may not be as significant as whether the U.S. will devise a policy that frees itself from ultimate dependence on the Salvadoran military-oligarchical establishment. It will only be when the U.S. firmly concludes that we do not *have* to keep an anti-Communist government in power, no matter what, in El Salvador, that the genuine forces of democracy will have the leverage they need to pursue a livable future.

Report from Ireland

GETTING THE IRISH UP THE OTHER SIDE OF REAGAN'S VISIT

JUST THREE WEEKS before President Reagan was due to arrive in Ireland a popular radio program went to speak to the children of Ballyporeen, the village from where Mr. Reagan's great-grandfather emigrated in the late 1840s and where hectic preparations for the president's two-hour visit were underway. Instead of subdued excitement at the imminent honor, the ten- and eleven-year-olds expressed grave concern at Mr. Reagan's support for the governments of El Salvador and the Philippines and at his siting of new nuclear weapons in Western Europe. They wondered whether the visit was motivated more by his reelection campaign than by any sudden interest in discovering his ancestral roots.

What Irish radio discovered in Ballyporeen was no hotbed of child radicals but rather the typical attitudes which dominated preparations for the visit, the first by a U.S. president in

Abigail McCarthy has been traveling outside the country. Her column will appear in the next issue.

office since the triumphant visit by John F. Kennedy in June 1963. Senior politicians and commentators were taken by surprise at the strength and nature of the protests against Mr. Reagan, most of them focused on his foreign policy. Most embarrassing for the government was seeing parliamentary members of both the parties who make it up, Fine Gael and Labor, opposing its motion to invite the president to address a joint session and pledging to stay away from Mr. Reagan's talk. These included the chairman of the Labor party, Senator Michael D. Higgins, an ardent critic of U.S. foreign policy, and the party leader, Mr. Dick Spring, who is also deputy prime minister. The youth section of the prime minister's party, Young Fine Gael, also declared its opposition.

Such opposition is rare in Irish politics where party members almost always follow the party line, particularly when in government. But on this occasion the parliamentarians were responding to a remarkable ground swell of public opinion. Far from representing a left-wing minority, as suggested by some politicians, this wave of protest came from a wide range of groups and individuals. Although there was never any question that Mr. Reagan's visit would stir some of the hoopla normal for such events, the extraordinary development was the depth and breadth of pre-visit opposition.

The academic world, for instance, was shaken by the extent and nature of opposition to the decision of the National University of Ireland to confer an honorary degree of law on Mr. Reagan. In response to a mass petition of university graduates, a special meeting of convocation — the democratic decision-making body which all graduates have the right to attend — was called to condemn the university's decision. This is also unprecedented.

Two of the country's three teachers' unions, not known for radical politics, came out against the visit, one of them passing a unanimous motion to this effect at their annual convention. Ireland's students' union, previously radical but much more moderate in recent years, also pledged to disrupt Mr. Reagan's visit. The union's leader, Mr. Joe Duffy, wanted Mr. Reagan to be presented with a petition carrying at least 40,000 signatures, "one for every person killed in El Salvador."

The main thrust of the opposition was organized by two different campaigns. The larger of these, the Irish Campaign against Reagan's Foreign Policy, was made up of leading trade unions, church groups, third-world groups, some political parties, and the Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Among the groups affiliated to it were the Conference of Major Religious Superiors, representing all religious orders in Ireland, which opposed the visit. Numerous priests and sisters were active in the campaign. Another group, the Reagan Reception Campaign, was made up largely of left-wing parties.

Ironically, Galway, the city in which Mr. Reagan was given his doctorate, is the diocese of Bishop Eamon Casey, an outspoken critic of U.S. policy in Central America and the Philippines, both of which he has visited. He once stunned public opinion here by calling on the government to break off diplomatic relations with Washington if the U.S. administra-

tion did not change its foreign policy. Bishop Casey gave permission for a peace vigil in his cathedral before the presidential visit. And though he would have been expected, as a member of the college's governing board, to attend the degree-granting ceremony, Bishop Casey discovered that a confirmation would prevent his attending any ceremony Mr. Reagan would attend.

The visit also prompted numerous publications. A group of leading Irish poets published an anthology entitled *After the War Is Over* to mark the president's visit. The tone of the poems can be judged from such titles as "Calypso for Grenada," "Hey Gringo," "Preparations for Survival," and "Last Puff-Puff to Ballyporeen."

Among the postcards issued to commemorate the visit was a set of six issued by the third-world group, Action from Ireland. These show photographs from Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the atom bombing in 1945, and others from El Salvador and the Philippines. The caption to a photograph of a group of Salvadoran refugees filing past an army patrol reads: "A family moves out as the military move in. A sad reminder of the days when the Regan family of Ballyporeen were forced (through the unjust policies of a foreign power), to leave their home and motherland." Posters, badges, and car stickers widely seen around Dublin proclaimed: "Reagan's foreign policy: Behind the smile is a killer." No special publications appeared to welcome Mr. Reagan.

The Irish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, of which various government ministers are members, sought a court injunction to prevent Mr. Reagan bringing to Ireland the briefcase containing the button to launch a nuclear attack. The campaign argued that this would contravene the pro-life amendment added to the Irish constitution after a contentious referendum last September. Furthermore, most of the places which Mr. Reagan was to visit, including Dublin, have been declared nuclear-free zones by their governing councils, argued Irish CND. (Their view did not triumph in court, needless to say.) Their badges and stickers for the visit made a play on a song which became the theme tune for Pope John Paul during his visit in 1979. "The whole world in his hands, extermination in the briefcase," it reads. Women from all over Europe planned to set up a major peace camp for the duration of the visit.

Perhaps most striking for commentators of the Irish scene was the widespread grassroots feeling against Mr. Reagan. Anti-Reagan groups were organized in the small towns throughout the province of Munster in which Ballyporeen is situated, and public meetings attracted large audiences. In Ballyporeen itself, hermetically sealed off on the day of the visit, most of the townspeople attended a showing of an anti-nuclear film in the parish hall and many expressed sympathy for the protests.

The Irish Campaign against Reagan's Foreign Policy was able to organize a "primary" to test public opinion about the visit in every town in the country, the first time such a widespread mobilization of opinion on any protest issue has happened. Letters to the national media on the issue ran at five to

one in favor of the protests.

Seldom before has Ireland witnessed such a widespread movement of protest. Vainly ministers and leaders of industry warned of the damage that could be done to U.S. investments in Ireland or to tourist prospects. Such arguments were quickly countered by opponents who pointed out that Ireland is already too dependent on American multinationals and who asked whether morality should be silenced for the sake of money.

From the point of view of U.S. interest in counteracting Irish opposition to aspects of its foreign policy, Mr. Reagan's visit was a non-starter. It revealed just how widespread is such opposition, and it showed just how much Ireland's traditional outlook on the world is changing. If warm public attitudes towards the U.S. could have been presumed by governments in both Dublin and Washington up to now, Mr. Reagan's visit has shown that such is no longer the case.

PEADAR KIRBY

(Peadar Kirby writes regularly from Ireland for *Commonweal*.)

European elections

DRIFT & RIFT

THE FALTERING OF EUROPEAN UNITY

EUROPE IS FACING two major threats in its quest for unity, one scheduled and the other not. In mid-June, the European Parliament will hold direct elections for the second time to select 434 representatives from the ten member countries for a five-year term. Sometime soon, probably just after that election, the European Community (which includes the Parliament) will have to agree on a budget or face bankruptcy.

The budget conflict involves Britain's insistence that it pays a disproportionate share of the European Community's costs. Margaret Thatcher wants both a partial rebate of the 1983 British contribution and a formula which will permanently reduce its share. The past three European summits — in Stuttgart last June, in Athens in December, and in Brussels in March — have stalled on this increasingly bitter question. Many European leaders fear the issue has permanently soured relations between Britain and the continental members.

Such conflicts are decided not in the European Parliament but in the Council of Ministers which represents the national governments within the Community. When the Council of Ministers cannot agree, discussions move to the European Council, the formal name for the summits of heads of government who normally meet three times a year as the supreme political overseers of the European Community. The Council of Ministers is a Community institution; the European Council is not.

Reelection of the European Parliament may focus discontent about the drift of the idea of European unity which today

seems reduced to accounts receivable. A poor voter turnout could confirm a mass boredom with the series of collapsed budget summits. But the hope of institutional reformers is a more vigorous Parliament and this will be harder to achieve if the voters show little interest.

In 1979, when the first direct election of the Parliament took place, 61 percent of the European Community's electorate voted. Lowest turnout was in the United Kingdom with 33 percent participation, while those countries with compulsory voting (like Italy, Belgium, and Luxembourg) had their traditionally high rate of balloting. But participation five years ago was aided by the novelty of the world's first international elections and the Community's first directly elected assembly. The original assembly of the 1957 Treaty of Rome establishing the Community institutions was composed of delegations from the national parliaments.

Direct elections were supposed to bring vitality to the Community, which has largely failed to capture the interest of the younger Europeans. Their parents' generation finds this failure baffling for to them a united Europe was an ideal forged in two bloody world wars. A "United States" of Europe was the means to prevent another European civil war from igniting worldwide nuclear conflict. To their elders, today's "successor" generation of Europeans lacks a sense of history.

Armed conflict today among Western European countries is unthinkable. To this extent the idea of European unity has succeeded. But the Community institutions which concentrate on the tedious work of harmonizing the national trade practices have become identified with mercantile thinking, not political idealism. Economic integration, which does, in fact, have a positive political value, proceeds so slowly that Community leaders fear that the long-range political goals have been forgotten.

A major problem is that only those who knew the Second World War are aware of how great the changes in Europe are. Children of these Community supporters seem to look right through Europe into a wider world where nuclear disarmament, a cleaner environment, and justice for the third world are the supreme values. The newer generations may even accept the European Community which their parents created but they will not get excited about it. Once again a new generation must be forgiven for not making their parents' concerns their own.

From the historic moment in 1950 when French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman proposed building peace on joint control of coal and steel to the present struggle to avoid fiscal collapse, the movement for European unity has been a major priority of the Christian Democratic parties of Europe and of prominent Catholic laymen. De Gasperi of Italy and Adenauer of Germany, two of those laymen from the defeated Axis countries of Europe, were typical of this amalgam of faith and politics.

Today, the Christian Democratic parties of Italy and West Germany are again leaders in reviving the European Community. Together with the smaller Christian parties in Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, and with individual members in Denmark, Greece, France, and Ireland, they form the Chris-

tian Democratic Group of the European Parliament, second in size only to the Socialists. A strong commitment to European unity is characteristic of the Christian Democrats, while the Socialists are split on both European integration and many other issues.

One of the leaders today in Community affairs is Dutch Commissioner Frans Andriessen, former head of the Catholic People's party of Holland. Andriessen is responsible for relations between the Parliament and the Commission, or executive branch, of the European Community. He visited Washington in May for Schuman Day, the Community's Independence Day, and told a Mid-Atlantic Club audience that 1984 is the year for the idea of Europe to develop or decline. His disciplined dedication to its growth and his relatively young age (54) give him a promising future, according to Brussels observers.

The European Parliament recently approved a draft successor treaty to the Treaty of Rome which would enhance parliamentary powers. Today the Parliament only gives advisory opinions to the Council of Ministers. It can also dismiss the thirteen Commissioners but not replace them, a power never exercised.

The Spinelli Report on the new treaty, named for the Italian deputy who coordinated the drafting within the Institutional Affairs Committee, is frank in describing the present Community. Without institutional reform, the 1979 direct elections "would have been a ridiculous parody of democracy" in producing an assembly "charged with delivering opinions to a Council which, with every day that passes, is becoming less and less able to act."

The report makes clear where the blame lies for this situation: the member governments acting for national, not European, interests. "From Council [of Ministers] to Council, the thorniest problems were referred to the European Council, and from European Council to European Council; the inability to decide grew until we reached the keenly awaited European Council in Athens." That meeting showed that the "emperor really did have no clothes."

European integration, which the report calls "necessary but paralyzed," must be rescued by the Parliament, for only such a popularly elected body can lead Europe out of its present "blind alley." A stronger Parliament and weaker national governments are proposed in the report for Europe, which must either engage its citizens "in the work of strong, responsible, common political institutions . . . or else everything that has been achieved is doomed to collapse."

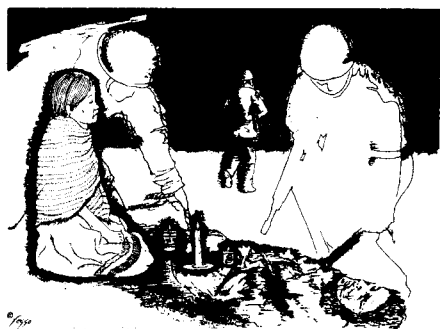
Since the report was written, another summit — the Brussels meeting in March — failed to solve the budget question. But it did reduce the bloated agricultural program which takes most of the Community's resources.

Whether the drastic reform proposed has any chance may be seen by the voter turnout on June 17 when the citizens of Europe show how much faith remains in its common institutions.

CLIFFORD HACKETT

(Clifford Hackett writes regularly about Europe from Washington.)

GUATEMALA'S WAR AGAINST THE CHURCH



No roadblocks to death

GORDON L. BOWEN

TRAVELERS in Guatemala frequently are delayed by army roadblocks. Identifications must be checked. Vehicles are searched, apparently for weapons thought destined for guerrillas in the lush forests of the mountainous northwestern part of Central America's largest and most populous nation. It is an efficient system, the only part of government anti-guerrilla operations visible to many visitors. Yet, on November 7, 1983, numerous roadblocks proved to be no obstacle to certain vehicles. Concealed within one of them was the body of a Franciscan priest, Father Augusto Ramírez Monasterio. Father Ramírez had been abducted by heavily armed men as he returned from the capital to his parish in Antigua. His blood-stained vehicle later turned up in a remote area. But his abductors had somehow been allowed to pass all the roadblocks, dumping the priest's cadaver in downtown Guatemala City. This was not unusual: Prospero Penados de Barrios, president of the Guatemalan Roman Catholic bishops, on March 24, 1984, stated that each day ten to fifteen families of new victims of similar occurrences seek his help. To whom have religious people become enemies in this part of the non-Communist world? Why? Answers to these questions may sharpen Americans' perceptions of the stakes that may be involved in current Congressional debates over foreign aid.

Guatemala possesses important minerals (oil, nickel) and has a six-hundred-mile border adjacent to the Mexican oil fields. Thus a clear-headed view may inform decisions which affect important interests for American policy. Yet Guatemala is a poor nation which had problems meeting basic needs even before political violence became the plague it is now. Eight of ten children endure malnutrition. Over half of all adults, and more than three-fourths of all indigenous peoples, are illiterate. (These Indians make up about half the nation's seven million inhabitants.) Less than one in five Guatemalans has access to safe water systems. Since 1978, widespread political

violence has further ripped this tattered cloth. Over one million Guatemalans are displaced persons, either refugees in Honduras, Mexico, and the U.S., or internal refugees within Guatemala. Religious workers have been in the forefront of efforts to ameliorate these calamities and devise strategies to help the poor. But many have been victims of violence and their projects forced to close.

The current military government of Guatemala was born in an August 8, 1983 coup d'état and is led by Brig. Gen. Oscar Humberto Mejía Victores. Many non-military groups greeted him favorably, but his triumph was facilitated by widespread dissatisfaction among Catholic officers. In some respects, church-state relations had reached their nadir during the short rule (March 1982-August 1983) of the "born-again" Protestant evangelist and self-appointed president, Gen. Efraín Ríos Montt. While no priests were killed during his reign (thirteen had died between 1978 and 1982), army power was used consistently to weaken the influence of Roman Catholicism in the rural areas. Though eighty percent of Guatemalans are Catholics, Evangelical revival meetings, run principally by the California-based Church of the Word (*El Verbo*) in which General Ríos was an elder, gained prominence. Often these were promoted by troops, while Catholic services were frequently banned.

According to testimony given by Guatemala's Roman Catholic bishops to the Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (CIDH), sermons at these Evangelical rallies contained marked anti-Catholic messages. *El Verbo* zealots were appointed as military commissioners and mayors in many Catholic villages. Since commissioners possessed the power to draft suspicious individuals into the Guatemalan security forces, conversions were brisk.

The souring of Catholic-Protestant ecclesiastical relations formed only a small part of the strain in Catholic relations with General Ríos Montt's ruling army. Other church grievances had more direct causes. Since the middle 1970s, the work of the church has been nearly extinguished throughout the highland home of the descendants of the Maya. Incidents from but one province, El Quiché, are illustrative. Catholic churches

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have been taken over and converted into army barracks in the villages of Chupol, Nebaj, Chajul, Cotzal, and Cuñen. Convents and residences of Catholic nuns now house military detachments at Cuñen and are used as a military prison at Jallobah. At Sacapulas, confiscated church properties have been turned into a municipal government building.

The repression of the Catholic church in El Quiché has been thorough. In Santa Cruz del Quiché, the provincial capital, the Rosary Seminary of the Dominican Sisters was totally destroyed by army troops. In rural Quiché, almost all church-run clinics, schools, cooperatives, and chapels have been destroyed. A two-hundred-page CIDH report of October 1983, held the Guatemalan army responsible for every one of these anti-Catholic outrages.

ANTI-CHURCH VIOLENCE in El Quiché has been emblematic of larger incompatibilities. Problems under General Ríos Montt were only a continuation of earlier military repression. The concerns of the church in Guatemala are related to the broad evolution of Catholicism in nearly all of Latin America since the 1960s. Influenced by Vatican II, Latin American bishops met in 1968 at Medellín, Colombia. The documents which were written there legitimized an already growing interest in social change among religious workers in the field, workers intimately familiar with pervasive, corrosive, endemic poverty. Institutionalized violence in protection of these unjust social structures was specifically condemned by the bishops. Especially in Central America, priests and nuns after 1968 deepened their commitment to social justice for the poor by helping peasants to form *comunidades de base*, Christian "base communities." These encouraged self-reliance for the community and literacy. Religious education was based on a new appreciation for instructions to ameliorate poverty and came to be dubbed "liberation theology."

Such developments, apolitical in themselves, were inconsistent with long standing norms of regional oligarchs and their ruling military elites. Most worrisome to Guatemala's rulers in the 1970s was the fact that members of the "base communities" tended to use their new literacy in efforts to effect social change: unions, cooperatives, and political parties. Rather than serving as a brake on social change, "liberation theology" encouraged it. Until his death in 1983, conservative Cardinal Mario Casariego opposed church involvement in political action in Guatemala. But many committed parish-level priests and nuns found ways to assist their neighbors' efforts. Activist religious workers formed a clandestine "Committee for Justice and Peace," which coordinated information on the growing repression.

Throughout the current (1978-1984) violence, parish-level church leaders have stood with their people. Sister Rayamunda Alonzo of the Order of the Good Shepherd, who worked with Indians at Cahaboncito hamlet, Alta Verapaz, provides an exemplary case. She was expelled from Guatemala in 1978 after Cahaboncito villagers joined about eight hundred others to protest army seizures of nearby Indian lands. They marched on a local municipal building to present petitions. Four chil-

dren and sixteen adults from Cahaboncito were among the 130 plus killed when the army machine-gunned the marchers at Panzos, May 29, 1978. Sister Rayamunda was among the last Catholic activists to escape with her life.

Political violence before 1978 usually had affected activist students, not activist priests and nuns. One hundred and fifty catechists (lay preachers) were killed in El Quiché during 1976, but only one priest, Father Bill Woods (an American) died that year, in a suspicious plane crash. Concurrently, Guatemalan authorities expelled 105 religious workers, closed down four Catholic radio stations, ended instruction at ten Catholic high schools, and forbade future religious classes and other activities at forty-two church-run religious centers.

The Panzos massacre and other conflicts in 1978 appear to have precipitated an army attempt to squash Indian/peasant politicization through additional measures. "Death lists" appeared. On June 30, 1978, Father Hermógenes López Coar-chita, priest for twelve years at San José Pinula, was brutally murdered. (His parish was less than a day's walk from that of Father Ramírez.) Father Hermógenes had been a sterling

ANOTHER COUNTRY?

"An even more serious obstacle in terms of the ultimate containment of armed revolt in Guatemala is the brutal behavior of the security forces. In the cities they have murdered those even suspected of dissent. In the countryside, they have at times killed indiscriminantly to repress any sign of support for the guerrillas. Such actions are morally unacceptable. They are also self-defeating."

—Report of the National
Bipartisan Commission on
Central America (Kissinger
Report, January 10, 1984, p. 100.)

"Sebastian Solis Pajarito Aceituno and his son, Domingo Solis Pajarito, both members of the Christian Democrat Party, were reportedly abducted from their homes in Rio Blanco, Sacapulas, in the department of El Quiché, on 18 January 1984 by heavily armed men in plain clothes. . . . The Secretary General of the Christian Democrat Party, Vinicio Cerezo, has stated that other party leaders had received death threats from 'death squads' operating with the consent of local authorities."

—Amnesty International, "Urgent
Action Press Release No. 25/84:
'Disappearance,' February 2, 1984

"In Guatemala, political parties and trade unions are functioning. An election is scheduled for July there, with a real prospect that that country can return to full constitutional government in 1985."

—President Ronald Reagan
televised speech, May 9, 1984

example of post-Medellín Catholicism. His service to his people had included organizing opposition to army-forced sterilizations of local women, helping villagers to resist army conscriptions of local youths, and helping to organize protests when Argus corporation tried to divert the local water supply. Yet to some these were sins, compounded by the fact that local peasants had formed a chapter of a (then growing, now repressed) rural labor movement, the Committee for Peasant Unity.

Targeted assassinations and "disappearances" such as Father Hermógenes's became the defining feature of life during the tenure of Gen. Romeo Lucas García, who took power the day after Father Hermógenes fell and held office until deposed by General Ríos Montt in March 1982. Especially during 1980-1981, unofficial "death squads" published lists of their intended victims, then murdered without fear of arrest. According to a former press secretary of the Interior Ministry, the stationery for these "unofficial" butchers was kept at his ministry and the lists were drawn up by senior army officials and other government officials. Not only were no valid convictions ever obtained in any of these cases, few were even charged. Nearly two dozen religious workers, for example, were murdered or remain "missing." General Lucas García's education minister, Clementino Castillo, virtually put the official stamp of approval on the religious slayings, saying the regime would be "inflexible and implacable" with nuns and priests found to have ties with the guerrilla movement.

UNDER General Ríos Montt, indiscriminate violence was directed at virtually the entire population of the highland Indian region, violence which led to at least fifteen thousand total deaths at the hands of the Guatemalan army since March 1982. On May 27, 1982, Guatemala's Catholic bishops finally broke from their traditionally cautious posture, publishing a scathing front-page condemnation of the army; "Never in our national history has it come to such grave extremes. These murders are being committed in the rural area and are genocide. . . . With profound sorrow we have learned and verified the suffering of our people by these massacres. . . . Not even the lives of old people, pregnant women, or innocent children were respected." Later in 1982, Amnesty International and other international human rights groups confirmed the bishops' observations: "massive extrajudicial executions" were occurring in the rural areas, committed by army troops.

The terror of massacres, assassinations, and "disappearances" was effective from a purely military point of view. Guerrilla bands were dispersed. Refugees from the highland violence huddled in camps in Mexico, further intimidated by "death squad" murderers from Guatemala. They struck even sixty-six miles *inside* Mexico to kill Mexican priest Father José Hipólito Cervantes, who worked with the displaced Guatemalans. On April 30, 1984, Guatemalan army troops (called "Kaibiles") attacked the refugee camp at El Chupadero, Chiapas (Mexico), killing six and dispersing the many wounded. In the highlands of Guatemala, peasants burned their Bibles and certificates of graduation from church courses, fearing army soldiers would kill them for ties to what

authorities claimed was the "subversive" church.

By 1983, General Ríos Montt's own brother, Bishop Mario Enrique Ríos Montt, publicly charged that the army's actions threatened to transform the already acute political crisis into an even more serious, full-scale religious war. Pope John Paul II, visiting Guatemala in the spring of 1983, sternly and publicly warned General Ríos Montt to desist his violence against the indigenous peoples. Oddly, the pope's sweeping criticisms of the regime failed to reach most American readers, as U.S. press coverage at the time tended to accent the hostile reception given the pope the preceding day in Nicaragua. Those few published paragraphs in U.S. papers which did note the pope's Guatemalan concerns centered almost entirely on his unsuccessful efforts to stop the execution of four prisoners by Guatemalan authorities. Claiming that the pleas constituted interference in Guatemala's internal affairs, General Ríos Montt withdrew his ambassador to the Vatican, Luis Valladares Aycinela, who had served there for sixteen years.

Finally, even those officers in the army who profess to follow Roman Catholicism began to act against General Ríos Montt's excesses. In June 1983, the most senior general in the army, Gen. José Guillermo Echeverría Vielman, was discharged after publishing an attack on General Ríos Montt that charged him with anti-Catholic bias. A purge of *El Verbo*-linked officials swiftly followed the August 1983 seizure of power by General Vielman's colleagues in the general staff of the armed forces and the installation of their leader and now chief of state, General Mejía.

WHILE MOST ANTI-CLERICAL outrages had occurred before General Mejía's current clique took charge, the general has continued to maintain that much of the Catholic church is "subversive." Indeed, the very day Father Ramírez "disappeared," General Mejía characterized the church as riddled with "subversives." Thirty-five days later a seminarian in Huehuetenango also was shot and killed by authorities. The Guatemala City daily *El Gráfico* reported two days after Father Ramírez fell that not only was Father Antonio Pérez Luna also seized and expelled to Mexico; additionally, they reported Mejía's ominous declaration that "many catechists" also were involved with "subversives."



"Not bad—I think we'll give them two stars this year."

The vital role of the catechists may be hard for North Americans to comprehend. These trained, but lay, preachers often have served as the only spokespeople for the church in areas where priests are barred. There and elsewhere the catechists have multiplied the services able to be given by ordained clerics. El Quiché, again, provides a suitable example. Though the Lucas Garcia era (1978-1982) was the most dangerous, only small improvements have come to the province. With the bishop for the area, Juan Gerardi, prevented from returning to his people after taking evidence of government repression to Rome in 1981, church work increasingly fell to the catechists. Three priests there had fallen in earlier violence: Father José María Gran Cirera (June 1980); Father Faustino Villanueva (July 1980); and Father Pedro Aguilar (May 1981). Few replacements ventured into the hills of El Quiché. To discourage any other religious presence, catechists were killed by the hundreds. Church properties — alternatively called “abandoned” and hot-beds of “subversion” by the regime — were seized. All of this followed on the heels of targeted assassinations of unionists and Christian Democrat Party (DCG) activists. Over two hundred leaders of that moderate Catholic reform party fell in just the final eighteen months of Lucas Garcia’s rule!

In January 1984, Americas Watch published a comprehensive review of conditions under Mejía, dubbing the overall situation to be one of a “nation of prisoners.” Their report presented exhaustive evidence leading to the unmistakable conclusion that Indian culture, and church efforts to meet Indians’ basic human needs, virtually have been destroyed. Catholic activists in the non-Indian areas had also begun to vanish. Monsignor Ramiro Pellecer, in September 1983, published a denunciation of anti-church violence. The quick response took the form of abductions of Catholic activists and catechists in areas never significantly affected by guerrillas, areas like Chiquimula and Escuintla. One bishop reported over one hundred parishioners were killed in just two months under Mejía. The Guatemala City daily *El Impacto* reported in November 1983, that five nuns had been attacked and beaten at the Pacific port of San José. Protestant pastors also were menaced. The Rt. Rev. Benedicto Coc remains “disappeared,” though the doctor who was abducted with him did turn up, shot dead in the face. In November 1983, Monsignor Pellecer stated that over five hundred catechists remained missing.

In November 1983, unrecorded in any North American newspaper, the Guatemala City daily *La Hora* published yet another pastoral letter, this one by Prospero Penados de Barrios, president of the Guatemalan Roman Catholic bishops. It stated that Guatemala’s political violence results from injustice among Guatemalans, and not from imported “subversion.” Speaking for all the bishops of Guatemala, it stated: “In Guatemala, as in other Central American countries, we live every day in terror, in a constant ‘state of emergency’ . . . It is in this light that the apparent docility of the population regarding campaigning under way for the July 1, 1984 election should be understood .

THROUGHOUT Central America, the church steadfastly has remained committed to social justice, even in the face of overwhelming provocations. Yet their anguish remains curiously remote from attention by the North American media, which are quite able to record each attempt by Polish authorities to remove crucifixes from state schools. Is only Communist persecution of the church newsworthy? Yet the repressed Central American church people are not indifferent to the threat to free religion which totalitarian Communism may someday pose in their nations. The real dangers, however, are far more immediate.

The hope of the Guatemalan church is not simply that a stable authoritarian system evolve, one which kills fewer priests. Repeatedly, from catechists to parish priests, from nuns to bishops, church people have expressed concern that this system no longer be one in which privilege is earned by using waves of violence to confine the laboring people to endemic poverty. The actual state of political and religious life in Guatemala has so thoroughly denigrated basic human rights that church and state may be expected to remain at loggerheads for the foreseeable future.

The Reagan administration agenda for Central America calls for a “transition to democracy” to accompany massive transfusions of U.S. military aid and economic support. In Guatemala, all must hope for this process to be more than yet another prelude to government-run “disappearances,” assassinations, and massacres. But the evidence unreported in the North American press is far from encouraging: where are Sebastian Solis Pajarito Aceituno and son, Christian Democrat leaders abducted January 18, 1984? How can religious institutions recover when Indian seminarians, like Prudencio García Mendoza, are shot dead in their homes by soldiers (as García was, December 12, 1983)? How can we rest assured that it is a “moderate” government that will receive our aid, when the same government has yet to try anyone in three separate incidents of army abductions of our own U.S.A.I.D. contract workers there, all occurring in 1983? What mellowing is revealed in the “disappearance” of over a dozen moderate trade union officials in January-February 1984 alone? In what sense can “improvements” be said to be occurring?

Look at the pattern: early in 1984, Sergio Vinicio Samoyoa Morales, the sole surviving son of one Guatemala City family, was attacked with machetes and hospitalized. A year and a half before, in September 1982, his brother, his two sisters, and his mother, Garciela Morales Herrera de Samoyoa, had been abducted. Soldiers had looted their home the following day. Señora Morales had worked at San Carlos University’s economics department for twenty-seven years, but pleas from university officials came to naught. Then, in early February 1984, heavily armed “unknown” men nonchalantly entered the hospital and abducted Sergio. His bullet-riddled corpse later turned up across town.

As with Father Ramírez, all of the routine roadblocks of this garrison state intercepted no one. The pattern is unmistakable: in Guatemala things are not out of the state’s control; rather, this state is far too fully in control.



CHRISTIAN LIBERTY & OBEDIENCE IN PERU

The quiet strength of liberation theology

CHRISTINE GUDORF

EARLY THIS YEAR, after six weeks in Peru, I returned to the United States with some thoughts concerning the crisis of authority in the church. I had arrived in January during a time of crisis for the Peruvian church. The church's popular movement, best recognized in the U.S. as a part of — the basis of — liberation theology, was on trial in the person of Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian priest and theologian known as the father of liberation theology.

The Vatican had initiated an investigation in February 1983 when it sent to the Peruvian bishops a list of observations questioning Gutiérrez's orthodoxy. It is almost universally surmised that the 1982 elevation to cardinal of Alfonso Lopez-Trujillo, the Colombian bishop who was secretary of the Latin American bishops' conference for the Puebla conference and a bitter foe of liberation theology, was instrumental in initiating the Vatican's move.

The investigation of Gutiérrez had not taken up theological issues, normally the stuff of heresy investigations. Rather it had focused, for the most part, on issues of church and state, the use of the social sciences (including Marxist analysis) in theology, the role of priests and religious in social movements, and similar "political" questions. It is generally agreed that on matters of historical orthodoxy such as incarnation, trinity, resurrection, eucharist, even issues of authority, such as papal infallibility, celibacy, etc., Gutiérrez is extremely orthodox. Nor has Gutiérrez's personal behavior been in question. He has been and remains in excellent standing with his own bishop, Cardinal Landazuri Ricketts of Lima.

In mid-May the Peruvian bishops announced they had ended the investigation, but would not issue a statement on Gutiérrez or on liberation theology. The process of investigation, set in motion by the Vatican over a year ago, had been a headache for the bishops as well as for Gutiérrez and the popular movement, chiefly because the bishops of Peru are split into factions. The bishops' difficulties in reaching a joint decision were magnified by the current unsettled nature of Peruvian politics.

The political situation in Peru is somewhat volatile. The elected government of Belaunde is attempting unsuccessfully

to suppress a terrorist movement which, though small and centered in the Andean province of Ayacucho, has shown an uncanny ability to bomb key targets and thus disrupt the routine functioning of Peruvian life, especially in the cities. Though police and army centers have been hit, the principal targets have been relay towers that carry electrical power to Lima and other cities from the hydroelectric plants in the mountains. Blackouts have been a regular and terrifying fact of life in Peru for months, and electrical engineers privately concede that hitting the right towers could deprive most of the country of electrical power for an undetermined time.

The unsuccessful military crusade against the terrorists comes on top of the government's failure to deal with the economy. Peru is in full recession as more and more national companies fold under the open import system demanded of Peru and other third-world nations by the International Monetary Fund as a condition for rolling over Peruvian debt.

If all this were not enough, Peru will take years to recover from the economic and social effects of last year's climatic disasters. Because of a disruption in the offshore current and winds, the rain clouds, which normally pass over the desert-like coastal cities to drop their water in the agricultural areas of the Andes, reversed their paths. The northern coast was plagued with massive flooding and landslides. The southern Andes, on the other hand, received almost no rain for eighteen months. The crops died, even the seed potatoes, the food staple of the mountains. It will take years to replenish them. Animals without pasture died in droves. Human infant mortality rates, which can run as high as fifty percent in some remote parts of the Andes, almost doubled in some places.

The failure of the government to deal with all these problems led to the election of many leftist candidates in the municipal and district elections late in 1983, provoking speculation about the May 1985 national elections and the reaction of the military to an electoral move to the left. In such a situation the bishops inevitably mirror the unsettled state of the nation.

In the midst of this political and ecclesiastical upheaval, the Catholic University of Lima once again offered its summer (February) theology course. In order to understand how Latin Americans confront the problem of liberty and obedience in the church, one must appreciate the nature and significance of such a course. This summer course began fourteen years ago, largely at Gutiérrez's initiative. The program has expanded

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into three two-week divisions, in which over 1800 students from all over Latin America enroll. (The course is repeated in August for 700-800 additional students.) The morning sessions, which Gutiérrez teaches himself, are graduate-level seminars. This year these sessions were canceled because Gutiérrez was too busy replying to questions from various bishops and groups of bishops.

The other two divisions are for pastoral agents, i.e., church workers at the staff level, and for lay catechists, active lay volunteers with minimal theological training. Both these levels have two to four hours of lectures each evening with two hours of small group discussion on the lectures each afternoon. The course is the high point of the year for most of the participants, who exchange news and ideas, retrain, and get a more global picture of the process of which they are a part.

The most astounding thing about the course is the students. A few years ago I heard Gutiérrez remark that his people are hungry for bread and the Gospel, both together, not first one and then the other. The course demonstrated a widespread hunger not only for the Gospel, but for *theology* — for reflection on the Gospel and on the experience of living/working in the light of the Gospel. As an example — some communities conduct a year of fundraising to send a group to the course. The group must then return and *teach* the course in its district during the following year.

These people found the subject of this year's course — St. Paul — totally contemporary and relevant to their lives and work. They feel very at home in the New Testament, not just because the texts seem familiar, but because they feel they are living every day the experience of the early church. There is a sense in which they feel themselves pioneers, just beginning missionary work, testifying to the power of the Spirit in the hearts of the gentiles (the poor), and undergoing persecution for the Gospel. This is a people who, like the early Christians, brave discomforts and dangers, threats and persecution, always praising the gratuitousness of God's love which has produced such freedom in them.

It would be very difficult to imagine that so strong a movement will be stopped, especially since the efforts to stifle it have been working mainly through a hierarchy far removed from the popular base of the liberation movement. Unless the conservative opposition develops a popular base, including an expansion of its adherents among clerics, religious, and lay people who work with the masses, it will have no chance of stopping the popular liberation movement. The reasons are twofold.

First, the pastoral agents and other workers in this movement connect faith to life. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in victory over death — death by hunger, repression, or unnecessary epidemics that plague the poor. To accept the Gospel is to know that all suffering is not the cross — that the cross is suffering voluntarily accepted for purposes of freeing others from sin and death. But most important, to accept the Gospel is to experience that in the work of organizing, struggling together responsibly for human growth in all its dimensions, God's love overwhelms one, animating all one does.

Poor women who share resources to build milk programs, collectives of poor Andean campesinos who send a shipment of their meager stock of potatoes to another community even more severely affected by drought — these people experience God's love at work within the realization of their own ability to change the world, to challenge death and disaster. That is Christian liberty — God's love at work, freeing people to act lovingly toward others. The power of the popular liberation movement lies in the identification of God's love with the development of persons, just as, of course, St. Paul identified as gifts of the Spirit all the talents developed in the community. So long as development of persons is experienced as the work of God, who can stop it?

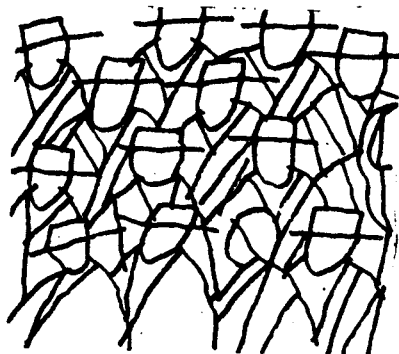
The second reason why I doubt this movement can be deterred is its relationship to martyrdom. The pastoral agents and lay catechists who spread this message are living with the reality of persecution. The December death of Sister Joan Sawyer, a nun taken hostage by prisoners at Lima's Lurigancho prison and killed by the police (with eight prisoners), the failure of the government to seek an alternative to killing and wounding the hostages, and the callous brutality witnessed by hundreds toward all the dead and wounded in the aftermath, were an example of official attitudes towards those who work with the poor and oppressed. One of the wounded hostages reports that a prisoner dying in her arms said, "See, Sister, you don't matter either."

A French lay worker with a campesino community was held for over a month in Cajamarca on charges of working with terrorists in a bombing, though her passport proved she was in France during the incident and her bishop denounced her arrest as a fraud. There are now at least 179 documented cases of persons recently "disappeared" in Peru, many of whom are church workers. This does not include Ayacucho, the province where the terrorists are centered, which is under martial law and controlled news coverage. The stories that come out from there tell of thousands jailed without trial, of massacres of peasants, including pregnant women and young children, of ongoing discoveries of mass graves.

IN THE FACE of this, and of open opposition to the liberation movement in the church itself, the pastoral agents take an amazing stance — that is, it seems amazing here, but it is well validated in the history of the church. They do what they can to avoid confrontation without compromising their commitment, support one another through hardship and threat, demand an account of the jailed, killed, and disappeared, and thank God that they are a part of this revelation of the power of God, of the power of the cross and resurrection. They are full of wonder, of joy, for they know that joy, not happiness, is the opposite of suffering, and that this joy comes from participating in the overcoming of suffering, through suffering.

They demonstrate their support for Gustavo Gutiérrez at every opportunity, but when outsiders talk as though his ecclesiastical difficulties, including the likely reintroduction of hearings in Rome, are going to be tragic for him and for the movement, the pastoral agents disagree, for two reasons.

First, they say, he has played his role, the ball is rolling, and though he certainly has more to contribute, the movement is not dependent on him now. It is not his movement, but belongs to all of them, to the people themselves. Second, they say they all live with persecution, and he has a major role in teaching them how to interpret and live with that persecution — can they not trust him to be strong enough to grow even more through persecution? The faith has always grown through its martyrs, they say, and though one does not wish for martyrdom or persecution, they do serve to test the faith in a way that strengthens it and demonstrates its power.



I was also astounded at the attitudes toward church unity expressed by these persons. They know very well where the pressure against the liberation movement comes from, and they recognize the power of the Vatican and the bishops. Moreover, they *respect* and even reverence these authorities. They say for example, “our bishops are good people — some of them just don’t understand, and that is, in part, our fault.” These people are loyal sons and daughters of the church, deeply steeped in the teachings of the Vatican and the bishops on evangelization and social issues. They view the controversy with church authority in very different terms than it is frequently understood in North America. They do not intend to abandon their commitment to the liberation process, and they do not expect the Vatican to lessen the pressure against them in the near future. But they are absolutely sure that there will neither be a split in the church, nor a gulf gradually widening between the hierarchical and pastoral levels. They continue to affirm that their bishops are good people who eventually cannot fail to recognize the Spirit at work, and that the Vatican itself will one day acknowledge the liberation movement as a valid manifestation of its own teachings.

Therefore, alongside the liberation theology books and periodicals for sale at the course were speeches and biographies of all the recent popes, including Juan Pablo II. One of the priests I met, deeply committed to the liberation movement, had recently opened a Juan Pablo II Center in his district to promote study of the pope’s speeches, among them speeches on Latin America. No matter what political strings are being pulled in the church, such priests say, the documents speak clearly. Juan Pablo II wrote in *Laborem Exercens* that “The church is strongly committed to this cause, because she considers it as her mission, her service, as a verification of her fidelity to Christ, to truly be the Church of the poor.” When

these people read that (or the title of the section it comes from: “Solidarity with Workers”), they read it as support for that which they do.

I found in Peru a different attitude toward the institutional church, one both more realistic and more appealing. In Peru the institution is not expected to lead the local church in the sense of interpreting its reality and directing its activities. The institutional center is expected to reflect back local efforts, to promote unity amid diversity, to inspire other parts of the church by lifting up the historical tradition and the example of other localities. It is also expected to use its weight to support the local church in difficulties with other institutions. The charisma of church leadership is not seen as independent, but as a reflection of the gifts given the whole church, to complement the basic life and work of the church that occurs on the popular level.

The lower expectations of institution and leadership, I think, have much to do with the Latin American’s greater degree of respect for church leadership. The unspoken but loud lesson of this local church for us in North America is that one can wait forever for change at higher levels. What must be done now is to evangelize at the popular level — the Spirit working in the community will both challenge and transform the hierarchy. As the Latin American students at the summer course in Lima replied to a handful of European and North American missionaries who insisted on the need to stand up to the church, to denounce its cowardice: “What do you mean we should stand up to the church, confront it? *We are* the church, and the Spirit is at work converting those who do not yet trust the power of God. We must only be patient, and continue our work.”

Jean Ducey

The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo

Each Thursday the mothers of Buenos Aires march in the Plaza for half an hour, in silence, bearing white scarves.

Sometimes the police break up the march. Always the mothers return. Their eyes are steady and seem to say, “We have lost our children; we have nothing to fear.”

It has been years since their sons and daughters were taken away. Their names and the date of the disappearances are sewn on the scarves.

The military has banned reporting on human rights; such writers face prison. Embroidery is not writing, yet five years of silent marches speak volumes.

The military wants now to censor memories.



Sinking into homelessness

MARJORIE HOPE
& JAMES YOUNG

HUNGER AND HOMELESSNESS are haunting the president these days. The public doesn't seem to buy the findings of his hunger task force, namely that it was unable to "substantiate allegations of rampant hunger." And on January 31 he referred to the "people who are sleeping on the grates" as "the homeless who are homeless, you might say, by choice." Yet two months later, he personally intervened to postpone the closing of a large shelter in a federally-owned building in Washington — a shelter that hundreds of people seem to have chosen as preferable to the grates. It is possible, of course, that the president was uncomfortable with *his* choice, since the Community for Creative Nonviolence, which operated the emergency refuge, had planned a protest march that would have brought the issue up to the White House gates.

Homelessness has become an election-year issue. Clearly, the fact that some two million Americans are roofless represents only the tip of the iceberg; it is less a problem in itself than a symptom of deeper, ongoing problems. Although Mr. Reagan would hardly agree, it is a symptom of the bankruptcy of our militarized economic system.

Homelessness baffles the public. If official unemployment (i.e., all civilian workers) is down to 8,772,000, a "mere" 7.8 percent (a figure which excludes the involuntarily underemployed and those who have given up looking for work), why does this phenomenon persist? Why are there so many more undomiciled people in 1984 than in 1975, when the recession of the 1970s hit its worst point?

Let's compare the two years in terms of the four major causes of homelessness: unemployment, displacement from housing, deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill, and inadequacy of social benefits.

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In 1975 official unemployment was higher: 8.5 percent. On the other hand, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in that year 78 percent of the jobless enjoyed unemployment compensation; in March 1984 only 37 percent of the unemployed received it. (During the 1975 recession, unemployed workers were eligible for up to 65 weeks in benefits.) Today some 5,544,630 "officially" jobless and some 1,457,000 "discouraged" jobless, or a total of 7,001,630 Americans, are without work *and* without unemployment compensation. Never since the inception of the program have so many unemployed been left without benefits.

Back in 1975 black unemployment was 13.9 percent. Today it's 16.6. Black teenagers (whose unemployment rate is currently 46.7 percent) and blacks in their twenties are disproportionately represented among the chronically homeless. In nine years the economy has moved steadily in the direction of high technology, leaving behind those who are limited in education, work training, and job experience. The majority of the chronically homeless — however able-bodied they may be — are simply unemployable in today's economy.

Displacement from low-income housing is one of the most widespread factors in homelessness. According to the Legal Services Anti-Displacement Project, displacement afflicts some 2.5 million Americans each year; moreover, some half million lower-rent units are lost each year through conversion, abandonment, inflation, arson, and demolition.

Let us focus on one example. Condo conversion has been accelerating since 1975. Research shows that 86,000 units were converted between 1970 and 1975, and 280,000 more in the following four years. Most existing tenants cannot afford the converted units because monthly costs often double; HUD has estimated that about two-thirds of the occupants move out. Many such condos were single-room occupancy hotels (SROs), traditional havens for single persons on welfare. In New York City alone, SROs have declined from about 50,000 units in 1975 to less than 14,000 in 1982. On the Upper West Side of New York, where many of these SROs have succumbed to conversion, rents for one-bedroom apartments now bring \$700 or more. Moreover, this process has been aided by tax abatements of up to 100 percent. This pattern is being repeated in all large metropolitan cities.

As homelessness was growing in the past decade, so, too,

was the proportion of income that the poor pay for shelter. The 1977 *Annual Housing Survey* reveals that in 1976 more than 5.8 million households paid over half of their incomes for shelter, including utilities. In 1980 (the latest year for which figures are available) more than 7 million households were paying over fifty percent of their incomes for shelter.

Space limitations preclude exploring the complexities of housing problems. The point is that displacement is a symptom of the overall shortage of low-income housing. The basic reason for the shortage is that housing for people with low and moderate incomes is no longer "profitable" on its own, without government subsidy. In the past decade, but especially during the first three years of the Reagan administration, the role of the federal government in the housing field has been shrinking. Even Congress' recent approval of 100,000 newly subsidized units (a victory for housing advocates over President Reagan's initial opposition) represents only a third of what it provided annually in the 1970s.

IN VIRTUALLY every city across the country, Americans have become alternatively repelled, mystified, and intrigued by the spectacle of men and women living in cardboard boxes, or washing their laundry in public restrooms, or getting on their knees in buses and screaming.

The mentally ill constitute about a third of the homeless population. Most have been discharged from institutions to community-based "systems." Yet according to Dr. John Talbott, president-elect of the American Psychiatric Association, fewer than 25 percent of the patients discharged from the state mental hospitals remain in any mental health program. Many are not even referred to such a program. Others are merely given a bus token and directions to a welfare office.

Despite mounting public criticism, the release movement, which began in the mid-1950s, has continued. In 1975 there were 193,721 persons in state mental hospitals; by 1982 they numbered only 125,200.

Community-based treatment and special housing facilities have not grown commensurately. In 1963 mental health professionals set 2000 community-based centers as a national goal; only 717 have been created. In the years 1977-82 New York State spent \$3.1 billion on mental hospitals and only \$540 million on services in the community. The picture is similar in other states. Furthermore, growing numbers of the mentally disabled on the streets are young "chronics" who have never been in an institution.

For the mentally ill, sheer survival is even more important than treatment. Ten years ago thousands of them lived in SROs; now these hotels are disappearing. Three years ago many more were receiving social security disability or Supplemental Security Income (assistance for the indigent aged, blind, or disabled). During the first two years of the Reagan administration, more than 350,000 recipients — nearly a third of them psychiatrically impaired — were dropped from disability rolls. They included hallucinating ex-patients who had not worked for years, paranoid persons who had been fired from their jobs, and at least one incontinent man who wore

seven pairs of pants at one time.

Under the Reagan administration, many recipients of assistance have been dropped from the rolls. Hundreds of thousands of "working poor" families receiving supplemental Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), have had their supplement (an incentive to work) cut down or cut out — despite the administration's avowed espousal of the work ethic. Supplementary Security Income has disqualified thousands of recipients. Daycare (which made it possible for poor mothers to work), Medicaid, and school feeding programs have been cut. True, overall outlays for food programs have increased, but only because of the increase in food prices and in the number applying. Over one million people have lost their eligibility for food stamps since 1981, and average food stamp benefits have been cut by 14 percent. Today the average stipend amounts to 47 cents per person per meal.

State governments were supposed to sew up any holes in the safety net. Instead, pressed by recession and cuts in federal aid, they lowered case welfare benefits by 17 percent between 1979 and 1983. In the largest state-federal public assistance program, AFDC, the average monthly stipend per person was \$72.40 in 1975 (adjusted to 1967 figures, \$44.89). In 1982 it was \$102.80 (in 1967 values \$35.67). Industry average weekly gross earnings, by comparison, rose from \$190.79 in 1975 to \$330.65 in 1982 — nearly keeping up with inflation. Clearly, the poor have been the real victims. The National Low

IN EARLY MAY, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) declared that only 250,000 to 350,000 Americans are homeless. Last fall the Department of Health and Human Services put the number at two million or more.

Why this discrepancy? Many advocates for the homeless see the motivation as political. Although Congress authorized \$60 million for rehabilitating and operating shelters in the 1983 federal housing bill, HUD officials have stated that there is no need for this aid. Authorized funds must be appropriated by Congress to become available for use, but President Reagan (despite his declared concern for the homeless) has indicated that he will veto such an appropriation, asserting that enough has been done for the homeless. For several months some members of Congress have expressed fear that even if the new funds are appropriated, HUD would refuse to disburse them.

Spokespersons for the National Coalition for the Homeless say that apparently HUD counted only homeless persons in shelters, not those who live in abandoned cars, buildings, parks and on the streets, nor individuals and families who double or even triple up in others' apartments. The need is so obvious and critical — many people are still being turned away from shelters — that those who are serious about helping the homeless do not get involved in a head count game, says the Coalition.

MARJORIE HOPE & JAMES YOUNG

Income Housing Coalition points out that if we adjust for inflation, since 1980, for each dollar cut from low-income programs (housing and other programs) \$4.15 has been added to the military budget and \$2.26 to interest on the public debt.

Statistics are telling, but they don't tell the whole story. Bureaucrats in their office towers tend to assume that human needs are neatly segregated. Hence, if we have a food stamp program and some people are able to get along on that, then anyone who is hungry must be a poor manager, or a glutton, or a cheat. Or, in presidential confidant Edwin Meese's view, a lazylegs who finds standing in a line for food "easier than paying for it."

Real life isn't like that. Unemployment, lack of low-income housing, eroding welfare benefits, and lack of resources for the mentally disabled often converge to produce homelessness. And in real life, hunger and homelessness are two dimensions of the same problem. Let's look at a real case — in Washington, the president's own backyard.

Bill (a few details of Bill's life have been altered to conceal his identity; the figures and circumstances are nevertheless real) is twenty-five, unemployed, black, and mentally ill although he has never been hospitalized. He has an engaging smile and a playful manner; he likes to play hopscotch with imaginary companions.

For nearly a year Bill received General Public Assistance, \$189 a month. To qualify for this he had to be judged temporarily disabled by District of Columbia doctors. (Doctors for the Supplemental Security Income program, which would have paid him up to \$304 a month, turned him down as not sufficiently disabled.) For a run-down hotel room Bill paid \$50 a week, leaving him with less than nothing to pay for all other expenses except those covered by food stamps and a medical card — i.e., clothing, transportation, non-prescription medications, tobacco, repairs, telephone calls, laundry, soap, toilet paper, and the like. How was he to survive? Bill had little choice. Sometimes he hustled; other men on the street persuaded him to be a runner in the numbers game. Sometimes he sold his food stamps — at about half their net worth. Since this left him quite hungry, he spent the last half of each month standing in line — often for one or two hours, sometimes in rain or snow — for a bowl of soup or spaghetti, dry bread, coffee, or Kool-Aid, and perhaps an apple. Some weeks he could not afford to pay the rent; then he was homeless and hungry.

Recently the D.C. doctors determined that because Bill had failed to fill out recertification papers that had come to him in the mail — papers that mystified and frightened him — he was no longer qualified as disabled. In D.C. an unemployed but "able-bodied" person is eligible for food stamps and some medical aid, but no cash assistance whatsoever. Today Bill lives on zero income — hustling when he can, eating where he can, alternating between sleeping on park benches and bedding down in barn-like public shelters. He has not taken his psychotropic medications in months, for no one is supervising them. He has lost weight, and developed a chronic cough and ulcerated legs.

AS HUNGER and homelessness take on stronger dimensions in this election year, there is growing talk of solutions — short-term ones. The food stamp program can be expanded. City and state governments, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Administration and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, can provide more assistance for emergency shelters. Churches can make more pleas for funds, material, and volunteers.

Some advocates and workers in the field, notably those who belong to the National Coalition for the Homeless, are pushing for a three-tiered approach: basic emergency shelter; transitional accommodations where clients would receive intensive help in obtaining social and health services; and permanent housing (which can include, for the chronically mentally disabled, supportive residences where services are built into structures of everyday life).

In all three tiers of housing, religious groups have had the most humane — and most economical — approach. As one worker put it: "The church brings a compassionate, caring dimension that you don't find in big bureaucratic city-run shelters." The churches have also pioneered with new efforts. For example, Saint Francis Residence in New York offers its mentally disabled residents a variety of social services, comparative privacy, and opportunities to work out long-range individualized plans. Yet even Saint Francis cannot exist without considerable government support.

Almost no politicians are talking about preventive measures. Yet the homeless promise to be a long-term problem.

While those of the "new poor" whose jobs have not disappeared forever may be reabsorbed into the economy, the chronically homeless form a new class, or underclass. They are here to stay, unless Americans change their basic social philosophy from making it up by their bootstraps to one based on fair shares.

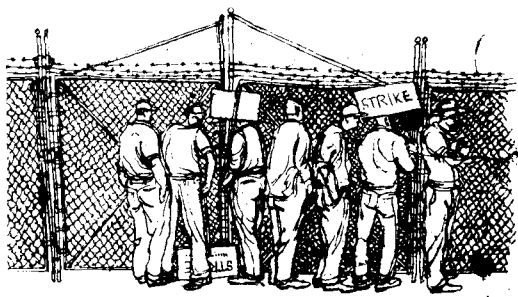
We should hardly be surprised by the number who have been sinking into homelessness during the last decade. It was predictable. In the past five years growing numbers of critics have pointed out that decarcerating mental patients into an uncoordinated, ill-funded community-based "system" was not working. For years we have talked anxiously about technological unemployment, yet never has government provided meaningful training or jobs programs, as many European nations have done. As for housing, clearly only the federal government can finance low-income housing on the scale needed. Yet the National Low Income Housing Coalition points out that only 19 percent of the renter households with incomes below \$3,000 lived in subsidized units in 1980. Less than one American household in sixteen is living in such units. This is the lowest proportion among the so-called civilized countries.

Although most European countries have been struggling with high inflation and high unemployment, they do provide social supports. For example, in 1982 unemployment reached nearly 14 percent in Britain, yet few families were known to have been turned out of their homes or to have had to sell their possessions. (The government owns 60 percent of the rental

housing stock, which makes eviction more unlikely, and also assures a more manageable waiting list.) In the same year, jobless Americans who did receive compensation got only an average of 63 percent of previous earnings; in West European countries the average was 85 percent. Family allowances have never been adopted here. The United States has the distinction of being the only industrialized country in the world without such allowances; sixty-one others, including many that are poor, find this an effective way to help keep families together and off welfare rolls. Because all European countries have some form of national health care, unemployed persons have not had to choose between food, shelter, and medical treatment, as thousands have had to do here. Moreover, deinstitutionalization has been carried at a slower, more con-

trolled pace. It is no coincidence that in European countries, where real safety nets persist even in hard times, homelessness is a comparatively rare phenomenon.

Emergency shelters and breadlines are not the answer to homelessness in the richest and most powerful country in the world. We do have three major choices. We can decide that the homeless are redundant, non-productive casualties of today's society, and simply write them off or hope against hope that somehow the overburdened churches will fill the gap. We can, if we consider them to be nonproductive, provide supportive services and some sort of guaranteed annual income. Or, if we still believe in liberty and justice for all, government, churches, and individuals can make concerted efforts to *prevent* homelessness.



WHO STANDS IN SOLIDARITY?

Lockout by Litton

JACK CLARK

"THE STAND THE CHURCH is called upon to take is genuinely counter-cultural." The twenty religious leaders gathered in the basement of the Methodist church in Athol, Massachusetts on May 16 were listening to Monsignor George Higgins, arguably America's leading labor priest for more than a generation. He and Reverend George Ogle of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society had traveled from Washington to urge support for 375 men and women locked out of their jobs at Litton Industry's UTD subsidiary in Athol since September 22. Ogle, who had spent twenty years ministering to workers in South Korea and had been expelled for his role in protests there, stressed the international importance of the Athol struggle. Higgins concurred and emphasized that just as surely as it must speak out on disarmament, today the church must stand with working people in their struggles, a stand, he warned in light of the current political climate and anti-union mood, that would prove not only difficult but genuinely counter-cultural.

Nestled in hills along Route 2 near the New Hampshire border, Athol by car is less than two hours from Boston. Rooted in the industrial history of the nineteenth century, Athol shares the character of other small towns to its west along the scenic Mohawk Trail rather than the newer, high-tech suburbs to its east.

Yet just as surely as Higgins's challenge to church leaders

does require a deep counter-cultural commitment, the battle waged in Athol between a small union and a giant conglomerate has implications which reach far beyond this semi-rural community.

The protagonists reflect larger, even international forces, and the labor dynamics have broad ramifications.

The 375 UTD (for Union Twist Drill) workers are represented by Local 276 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE), a small international union not affiliated with the AFL-CIO. UTD is a subsidiary of Litton Industries (the huge conglomerate based in Beverly Hills, California). According to other union leaders, UTD's Litton parent holds the worst record of labor law violations since J.P. Stevens, the giant textile firm which was a target of union efforts in the 1970s.

FOR TEN YEARS prior to 1983, labor relations at UTD itself had been excellent, according to Local 276 President Jack Davidson, president since its founding in 1967. Then in January 1983, more than four months before the contract expiration, management asked the union to forgo a scheduled wage increase. The union's response was that such a request could be considered in the larger context of a multi-year agreement if the company would open negotiations early. The company refused. Weeks later when bargaining did begin, the UTD management team was accompanied by a representative from Litton headquarters. Union leaders found they were being presented with new demands for worker give-backs in salary, paid holidays, and health insurance benefits. The union offered to consider all these concessions on the basis of the

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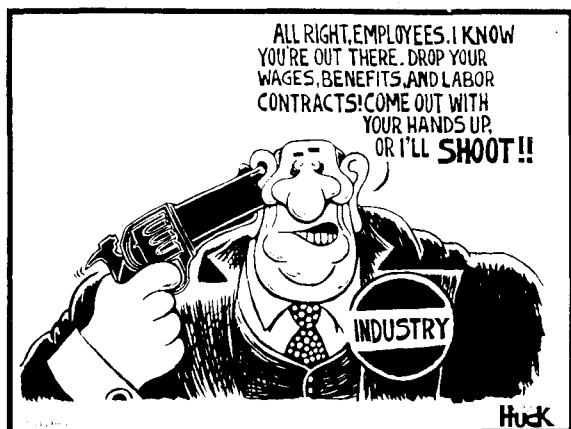
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company's need, but Litton and UTD must agree to open their books. The company refused, stating it was not pleading inability to pay, but that cutting labor costs represented a strategy to guarantee future competitiveness. The contract deadline of May 23, 1983 came and went without an agreement. The union decided to continue working while negotiations went on.

In July, the company escalated the conflict by unilaterally imposing a pay cut and reductions in paid holidays and contributions to health insurance premiums. The union protested but kept working. In September, the escalation went further. The company engaged in both petty harassment and serious violations of agreed practices. The harassment consisted of denying workers the right to leave the plant during the five minutes of wash-up time at the end of each shift. Workers responded by staying in the plant and organizing a march on the personnel office. They chanted in unison, "No cuts, no way!" Angered and frightened, management issued a warning to union chief steward Breck Balmos that any more chanting would result in a plant shutdown. Two weeks later, on September 22, the company violated a long-standing labor relations practice by suspending six workers without prior warnings. A number of other workers walked off their jobs to protest. Meanwhile, during the demonstration, the local leadership was meeting with company officials in a negotiating session. As Balmos recalls it, Stanley England, the UTD director of industrial relations, looked at his watch and announced, "It is 9:55 a.m., and we consider the union on strike." Ignoring protests from Davidson, Balmos, and other union leaders that only the union could call a strike and that it had not, management shut off the electricity, called the police to clear the premises, and locked the doors.

Since September 22, relations have deteriorated. The union expresses its continued willingness to return to work at the conditions prevailing on September 22 while a new contract is negotiated. UTD-Litton officials insist that a new contract must be signed before the plant is reopened. Their terms for a new contract keep getting worse. (When negotiations opened in April 1983, the company was asking a wage cut of \$1.54; by June, the request had been trimmed to \$.49; now, the company has jumped to a \$2-per-hour cut in pay.)

Interviewing residents of Athol early this May, *The Green-*



field Recorder found some resentment toward the union. Many of those interviewed thought that \$7 an hour, the wage UTD employees would make with the cuts, was very good money for the area. What scares just about everyone in Athol is that Litton will close the plant and move South. In April, Litton had announced that 200 of the 375 jobs were being transferred to Gaffney, South Carolina. This worries union members as well. But Jack Davidson points out that labor concessions don't necessarily save plants or jobs. "The company gave us no guarantees on any jobs being maintained for the duration of the contract, even if we took cuts," Davidson says. As for sentiment in the community, Davidson and other union leaders counter that sympathy for the workers runs high. A union fund-raising event in early April received fifty donations from local businesses.

Davidson has led the union well through this long trial. Committees of members are involved in preparing food for a soup kitchen which serves lunch daily to members and their families. Buying food and setting up distribution for the weekly food bank occupies a different group of members. An emergency aid committee considers requests for help from hard-pressed members. No regular strike benefits are paid, but the lunches and free food are available with no questions asked. In addition, the union runs a job referral service helping members find either part-time and temporary jobs or permanent positions. All of this, combined with working spouses, welfare for families with children, and tremendous determination has added up to survival for more than eight months. An organizer from the international union estimates that \$160,000 has been spent on strike benefits during this lockout. Even assuming that 150 of the locked-out workers have jobs by now, that comes to less than \$23 per member per week. A union leaflet charged that a UTD official had threatened that "we will starve them into submission," a dubious strategy toward a union which knows how to stretch dollars so far. Those horrified at such threats can help by forwarding contributions, even modest ones, to UE Local 276, 599 Main Street, Athol, Mass. 01331.

THE LARGEST employer in Athol is Starrett Tools, a non-union plant down the street from UTD, owned by Doug Starrett. Starrett Memorial United Methodist Church, where Higgins and Ogle addressed the clergy meeting, is named after his grandfather. According to Reverend Jan Smith Rushton, present pastor at Starrett Memorial, Doug Starrett holds far-right views and denounces unions in the local paper as part of the international Communist conspiracy. Union officials suspect the influence of Starrett officials in a February letter from the local Chamber of Commerce trying to spark a back-to-work movement. Yet, Starrett, like anti-union employers in other parts of the country, is calculating in his anti-unionism. Pay at Starrett lags behind pay at UTD, but not by much. But since the lockout, pay at Starrett Tools has also dropped. One woman union activist, who asked not to be identified, said that her husband's pay had dropped \$1000 when reduced bonuses and contributions to health insurance were considered. Some-

times non-union workers have a very big stake in unions. On the walls of Local 276's office there are charts noting the origin of contributions to the strike fund. Plant gate contributions from Starrett workers amount to more than \$200.

The Athol story is an important one. Its elements include a community facing the possibility of a catastrophic plant closing; the symbiotic relationship between a conglomerate interested in breaking a union and a local plutocrat interested in making sure his plant is never unionized; and workers struggling heroically over a long period, creating in the process a sort of counter culture.

Athol is also part of a much broader picture. Reverend Ogle was not exaggerating when he talked of Athol as being the front line of an international struggle. Begin with Litton. Athol and UTD represent a very small part of its empire; only 375 workers out of 60,000 employed in the U.S. Litton's labor relations practices in Athol are fairly typical of the conglomerate. Litton denied that it has a company-wide labor relations policy, but unions often encounter local managers or division managers (particularly when the division has been recently purchased) more willing to recognize the union's needs than the representatives from Beverly Hills who start attending negotiating sessions. To avoid unions or break them, Litton has moved plants, fired organizers, and engaged in endless bad-faith bargaining all over the country. UE Local 276 members know this and see their struggle as a major fight against an anti-union conglomerate. This effort involves nearly a dozen other unions which are engaged in efforts to organize Litton.

In the age of Ronald Reagan, Litton's behavior towards unions marks it as but an extreme case in a general trend. Monsignor Higgins stressed that in his forty-plus years of following the labor scene, he has never witnessed such a pervasive anti-union climate. In Athol and around the country, corporations are challenging the very existence of unions in ways they have not since the anti-union American Plan of the 1920s. A substantial bloc of public opinion supports the union-busting behavior of employers. As Higgins noted, such phrases as, "Unions have outlived their usefulness," and "Unions were once needed, but they got too big," are repeated over and over again. "I get a little tired," Higgins told a supper meeting for the locked-out workers, "of American conservatives who so identify with Solidarinosc that they confuse themselves with Lech Walesa, yet oppose unions here. The crisis we face is international." He spoke of Pope John Paul II's teaching that unions are indispensable, and wondered aloud how many religious leaders, how many Catholic leaders, were willing to stand with the Pope on this in America today. Reverend Ogle reminded the same workers' supper of the message carved on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia: "Proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants." The phrase comes from Leviticus, and it refers to the announcement of the Year of Jubilee, when, once every fifty years, the Israelites were to free their slaves and redistribute the land so that economic justice and equality might be restored.

In Poland, South Korea, the Philippines, Chile — and in

Athol, Massachusetts — it is the free movements of working people which provide the cornerstone of democracy. In 1984 to proclaim liberty by taking a pro-union stand in any of these places is a challenge for the church and the non-religious alike. It is to be genuinely counter-cultural.

Screen

PARSIFAL AT THE BAT

INDIANA JONES IN THE JUNGLE

THE HERO of *The Natural* isn't the baseball superstar played by Robert Redford. The hero is Parsifal. Ostensibly his name is Roy Hobbs and he comes from the golden wheatfields of Nebraska to play for manager Pop Fisher of the hopelessly last place New York Knights. In truth, he comes from the magic kingdom to regenerate the unfertile realm of the Fisher king. His bat — personally carved from a tree downed by lightning — is christened Wonderboy, but in truth (to mix myths a bit) it's Excalibur. With such a weapon, Hobbs leads the Knights to the grail of a pennant. The only thing is, Hobbs must beware dames and knaves, glamorous sirens, and shady gamblers. *The Natural* is a baseball film, to

Zona Teti

Verse for a Roman General (For M.L. Lord)

He is hung on a tree, eagles look down,
and the arrows sing as they make him St. Sebastian,
divinity on a spit, plump as a heart, indignity alfresco.
The sun draws his life in a regressing ray.
His skin is a sheath of light.

The gold leaf in the wood, shining like water,
are you God, are we to look for another,
those salamandrine thighs with the shimmering fire,
his navel could bloom to a stem and a flower.

and he shines stark, stripped clean as a jewel,
phosphorescent, simmering to a cool
as the mist drifts from him, thinning like wool
twirled by the wind off its spindle,

and the gloom comes in, eagles bed down,
now I can meet you with eyes unshut.
A cicatrice on the face of darkness about to heal up,
give us a sign we saw aright.

We want to be sure you were the light,

or must I go on love alone, with heart
for the beacon to show me the road and its terminal
tree? Then leave me the comfort that we shall meet there,
though if I must go empty, I still take the dare.

be sure; the first time at bat, Hobbs literally knocks the cover off the ball. But the plot is pure “waste land,” transplanted to the outfield, though perhaps too neatly.

Based on Bernard Malamud’s novel, *The Natural* makes use of some considerable talents. Besides Redford, there’s director Barry Levinson (formerly of *Diner*); Robert Duvall (of everything); Glenn Close (of *The Big Chill*, Broadway’s *The Real Thing*, and with Duvall, the recent film, *The Stone Boy*); Barbara Hershey (of *The Right Stuff*) as the first femme fatale to sidetrack Hobbs; Kim Basinger (*Never Say Never Again*) as the second; and Wilford Brimley, one of the best supporting actors in the business, who brings to the role of Pop Fisher the same surly but good-natured charm he has displayed in *The China Syndrome*, *Absence of Malice*, *Tender Mercies* (with Duvall), and (of course) *The Stone Boy* (with Duvall and Close). The cast is not just star-studded; these are stars who should be capable of concerted teamwork, who can display a special chemistry. But rarely in the course of filmmaking have so many, with so much, produced such an extravagant misfire. Why?

In part, the film fails because it forces scattered elements of Malamud’s story into a contrived and over predictable pattern of clichéd coincidence and symbolism. Hobbs’s main rival on the Knights dies conveniently by crashing through an outfield fence; his good angel, Glenn Close — so wholesome-looking she’s in danger of turning into cream cheese — shows up at his crucial game wearing a hat suspiciously resembling a halo; and their son (a completely new addition) shows up at his last game to provide that extra edge of inspiration. The sensationally melodramatic plot is worsened by over-obvious cinematography: everytime lightning gathers in the sky over the stadium, we know that Wonderboy will strike. The exaggerated and overworked symbolism of the movie is doubled and tripled by excessive slow motion and other expressive techniques that annoyingly underline the significance of too many actions. *The Natural* in short, belies its name with studied artifice.

To be sure, *The Natural* has some very pretty scenes, especially in gold and amber — either to match Redford’s coloring or to evoke nostalgia for a golden age of American innocence (the time is 1939). Once, for example, when Hobbs is first on his way to the big leagues, he meets “the Whammer,” a retired slugger and Babe Ruth look-alike, then strikes him out on a bet. The scene takes place by an old railroad crossing as the sun sets over surrounding wheatfields. There are some other powerfully elegaic touches, too many of them, in fact, and all of them obvious. The play of light and darkness, moreover, works to vulgarize the moral content of the film (the evil judge who owns the team keeps his shades drawn). Unlike Malamud’s protagonist, Hobbs triumphs over corruption at the end of the movie version of *The Natural*, but — despite the nostalgia — you never get the sense that he achieves this sentimental heroism the old-fashioned way: earning it by inner struggle.

The Natural, in short, keeps everything external, almost perversely so. At one point Hobbs reflects on his mistakes, and Glenn Close gets off the film’s best line, “We have two lives.

The one we lead and the one we learn with.” But all Redford is given to respond with is, “God, I love baseball.” It’s vapid, the equivalent of “baseball has been berry berry good to me” on “Saturday Night Live” mock interviews with “Chico Escuela.” Redford relies on simplicity and understatement, but whether it’s his acting, or the screenplay, or the cinematography, or all three, *The Natural* seems to lack depth.

It lacks depth especially for someone who genuinely loves baseball, since both book and movie distort whatever moral significance the game might still have, despite the greed of both players and owners. A myth is imposed on the sport; the sport is not allowed to give rise to the myth, which here misses the subtlety of its raw material through gross oversimplification. In baseball, there is no such thing as an isolated superstar like Roy Hobbs. The game is not, as Redford claims in recent interviews, an arch-romantic encounter of one man at bat against nine on the field; it is nine against nine, who alternately reverse position from offense to defense (which Roy rarely has to play), who constantly shift, adjust, and measure. It’s not a game of singular grand heroism, but cooperation, flexibility, reliance on others — in a word, teamwork.

Roy Hobbs isn’t a member of a team; he is Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, and Hank Aaron rolled into one. If someone like Hobbs did play, the opposition would have a simple time of it: they would just walk him, each time up. But the problem with *The Natural* isn’t that the myth doesn’t match the facts. The problem is that the facts are far more interesting than the myth. Malamud’s text cerebrally sensationalizes a reality it pretends to illuminate. It’s a classic of literary modernism; you can see the myth-fact parallels chalked on blackboards, with diagrams showing how the Knights are knights, etc. complete with arrows. Only they point to the wrong thing. Or is the right stuff too unheroic?

THE PRIESTS of Kali (remember *Gunga Din*?) are at it again; tearing hearts out, performing human sacrifice, renewing the ancient conspiracy of the original “thugs,” and chanting mantras on their route to worldwide domination. They have stolen this sacred diamond from a poor Himalayan village (grabbing its children to boot), and ace archeologist Indiana Jones (having just narrowly escaped the clutches of a sadistic Shanghai gangster), must penetrate their secret palace, recover the diamond, rescue the kidnapped children, and destroy this focus of evil in the early twentieth-century world. If it wasn’t for the services of his faithful “Indian” companion (here a Chinese boy, but you get the idea), Indiana might not make it, especially considering the non-services of a female companion who is dumb blonde enough to high-heel it to the Himalayas. Such is the plot of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*; in other words, *Raiders of the Lost Ark II*, without the frankness of that designation.

If *The Natural* sacrifices its inner life to stylized exterior, *Indiana Jones* has no hint of interiority: it’s pure outrageous action, with one special effects chase after another. It’s the first so-called “summer fun flic” of 1984, direct from *Raiders*’ team Steven Spielberg and George Lucas who here give us

the cinematic equivalent to the old TV lure to "tune in next time." Confronting the eternal show biz question ("What'll we do for an encore?"), they have answered quite simply: *the same thing*, wound up to the nth degree. Here they have put their heads and stocks together in one grand effort to out-wow all other action-adventure fantasies. The only question is — who will tire first, Indiana, or us?

Indiana Jones is exhausting and finally boring. Beginning with the hectic Shanghai prelude, there is never a pause to Indiana's escapades; it's as if we're supposed to be on the edge of our seats before we're even in them. The pace thereafter (if "pace" applies), is a relentless assault, and, I suspect, an audience wipe-out even for the self-propelled torpedoes among us. After a rickshaw car chase, Indiana must endure: mountain air crashes, treks in the high country, yucky eel dinners at the sinister palace; secret passages crawling with giant bugs and bevvies of snakes; spear-studded chambers; forced initiation into Kali rites; swordfights with the High Priest; a mine-shaft escape-ride that out-vertigoes all roller coasters, cascades of water flooding the mine tunnels, and finally (I think), a floppy suspension bridge perilously roped over some gaping crocs.

The crocs are both cute and key. Considering their prominence in other films of this kind, they should get a nomination for an award sometime, or at least some credit for all their

cameos. But they also illustrate the limits of this genre, an imitateness that kills. Ironically there is no suspense in *Indiana Jones*, not because we know he will survive, but because we have seen it all before — the jaws, the chases, the evil priest, the works. When so predictable, the action pales.

There are other, more serious problems, particularly the violence (Spielberg has acknowledged that he would not send a ten-year-old to see the film), and the stereotypical image of an exotic country as rife with homicide and perversion. There is also the obscenity of the cost: \$25 million. It takes ten minutes to read the production teams listed on the screen credits at the end of the movie, and their names occupy four-fifths of the space on Paramount's publicity foldout.

Spielberg justifies the expense by saying that profits from such movies allow him to make better films without studio interference. I hope so. He is far better at films that blend myth with action, inner with outer, love and thrills. Interestingly, these are set in America (*E.T.* and *Close Encounters*). At home, Spielberg is deeper — better, in short, at Indiana than Indiana Jones. Like *E.T.*, he should come home and escape the clutches of the evil High Priest Lucas, whose cinema rites seem to demand tearing the heart out of every film.

TOM O'BRIEN

(Tom O'Brien, one of the guest critics reviewing movies for Commonweal, teaches at the Manhattan School of Music.)

Books: GUTIERREZ & RATZINGER

A DECADE has passed since Gustavo Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation*, the classic statement of Latin American liberation theology, was published in English. His new books develop, apply, and defend the basic themes of that volume. *We Drink From Our Own Wells*, originally a series of talks on spirituality, combines liberation theology with biblical theology in a meditative style in which biblical texts serve for the elaboration of themes of liberation and spirituality. Part I points to the contextual experience of Latin American liberation spirituality. The biblical theme of God's poor in a foreign land illustrates the situation of the poor in Latin America. Part II develops discipleship as the following of Jesus in order to relate spirituality to Jesus's life-praxis. The Pauline distinction (Romans 8) between the flesh and the spirit serves to contrast a life of an idolatrous covetousness for material possessions with a life of the spirit ordered to love and the building of community. Part

THE POWER OF THE POOR IN HISTORY

SELECTED WRITINGS

Gustavo Gutiérrez
Orbis, \$10.95, 240 pp.

WE DRINK FROM OUR OWN WELLS

THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF A PEOPLE

Gustavo Gutiérrez
Orbis, \$7.95, 181 pp.

"LA TEOLOGIA DE LA LIBERACIÓN EN DEBATE"

Joseph Ratzinger

Oiga de Lima, January 23, 1984

Francis Schüssler-Fiorenza

III outlines a spirituality based on conversion, commitment to the poor, efficacious love, community, and joy.

The Power of the Poor in History, a collection of essays, much more analyti-

cal and systematic, outlines developments since Medellín, argues against the anti-liberationist preparatory document written for the Puebla conference, and defends liberation theology. Gutiérrez emphasizes the differences between liberation theology and North European political theology. Whereas liberation theology operates out of the experience of oppression, European political theology is much more involved with the post-Enlightenment crisis of faith and reason. Consequently, Gutiérrez develops as his major theme the option for the poor and the historical role of the poor within the process of liberation.

As a volume of advocacy and defense, *The Power of the Poor in History* can readily be compared with Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's theological analysis published in the Peruvian journal *Oiga* and widely reported in the popular press as the Holy Office's denunciation of liberation theology. By situating liberation theol-

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ogy within the context of secularism, Marxism, scientific objectivity, and Bultmann's existential interpretation of the Scriptures, Ratzinger interprets liberation theology primarily from a Northern European perspective. He advances three charges: Just as Bultmann's existential interpretation reduced the Christ of faith to existential categories, liberation theology, going one step further, reduces the faith to social and political categories. Secondly, just as secularism uncritically embraces science, so too liberation theology uncritically accepts Marxism as a scientific analysis of society. Finally, since liberation theology emphasizes the experience of basic communities and the commitment to the poor as the basis for understanding the Bible and faith, it advocates a new sectarianism. Political reductionism, use of Marxism, and sectarianism are the charges.

If these charges are brought against Gutiérrez's latest books, then a much more nuanced judgment is demanded. The charge of political reductionism interprets liberation theology as another instance of secularism. The religious content of faith, it is alleged, has been given a secular and political meaning. This charge overlooks not only differences of context, but also distinctions made within Gutiérrez's writings themselves. Since the Ratzinger document views liberation theology as an extreme form of secularization, it fails to consider Gutiérrez's central point that the starting point of Latin American theology is not secularization as in Europe but rather poverty and oppression. Moreover, it overlooks distinctions between scientific political rationality, utopian imagination, and faith, originally developed in *A Theology of Liberation* and further explicated in the volumes under review. Faith has a significant role, Gutiérrez argues, because political problems have at their basis the distortions of sin: selfishness and covetousness instead of love and charity. Therefore, sin lies at the root of social discord and of political oppression. One could argue against this position that political and societal problems are much more structurally complex than any analysis which roots them in sin will

uncover. It would therefore seem Gutiérrez could be more easily criticized for reducing politics to religion than for reducing religion to politics.

The charge of Marxism is a still more complicated matter. The relation of liberation theology to Marxism is double-sided. On the one hand, no theology is more anti-Marxist than liberation theology. Orthodox Marxism has criticized religion either as an ideology or as the ineffective protest against alienation and false subjectivity. Since liberation theology explicates the social-critical impulses of religion, it displays religion as anti-ideological. Since Gutiérrez spells out the prophetic and social-political implications of Christian spirituality and faith, he counters the Marxist interpretation of religion with a vision of religion as the basis of a radical critique of all ideologies.

On the other hand, liberation theology, has taken over several key concepts of Marxist analysis. Gutiérrez accepts a theory of dependency that somewhat simplistically views the impoverishment of Latin American countries to be proportional to the enrichment of the North American states. Accepting the Marxist analysis of class conflict, he not only advocates a preference for the poor, but, — and here's the troubling point — also sees the poor as the possessors of truth and the nearly sole agents of social change. The preferential option for the poor is not some sentimental compassion for the poor, but rather an act of solidarity with the poor as agents of social change.

Unfortunately, Gutiérrez's analysis and defense fails to take account of current criticisms of Marxist theories of so-

cial and historical dynamics. He does not even take into account the neo-Marxist critique of orthodox Marxism. Gutiérrez points to the obvious distinction between rich and poor, to relations of exploitation, oppression, and dependency. But to point to these facts is not enough. It does not automatically legitimate Marxist social analysis. Even if one prescind from criticism made against Marxism from a capitalist perspective, it seems to me that Gutiérrez could have learned from the neo-Marxist critique of orthodox Marxism. For example, Ernst Bloch has pointed out the problems of an exclusive reliance on the proletariat and the negative characterization of all bourgeois culture as ideological. This critique underlies Bloch's attempt to retrieve rights language and elements of a natural law tradition as well as religion. For Bloch it was important that Marxism not view liberal bourgeois culture exclusively as ideological, not only to obtain a broader basis, but also and especially to avoid the dangers of totalitarianism inherent within Marxism.

Jürgen Habermas has argued in his multifaceted critique of Marxist theories of history for the neglected role of technology in relation to productivity, ideology, and history. Accordingly, any critique of dependency between rich and impoverished nations has to take into account not only exploitation, but also the distances created by technological advance as well as by structural and cognitive societal differences. Unfortunately, Gutiérrez not only criticizes poverty, dependency, and exploitation, but he also criticizes bourgeois democracy and the Western Enlightenment as the causes and agents of oppression. That Marxist thought itself stems from that Enlightenment or that Marxism has undergone serious criticism, even at the hands of neo-Marxism, is not considered.

If liberation theology is to be successful, it must reflect on the possibility of society *after* the revolution. Liberation theology stresses the preferential option for the poor and the oppressed. It is sufficiently aware of the sociology of knowledge to know that knowledge is socially conditioned. Nevertheless, by moving from the preferential option for the poor

A rereading of the Gospel from a position of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed will enable us to denounce the use made of the Gospel by the mighty in order to place it at the service of their own interests. But . . . the Gospel message . . . can never be identified with any concrete social formula, however just that formula may seem to us at the moment. — Gustavo Gutiérrez
The Power of the Poor in History

to the more radical and more exclusive affirmation of the poor within society and history, it is in danger of romanticizing the role of the poor in the way that Marxism romanticized the proletariat. Further, it courts disaster in neglecting to link its option for radical social change, and even revolution, with the emancipatory movements and interests within liberal Western society. While Gutiérrez, borrowing from Marxism, makes praxis a criterion of truth, neo-Marxists like Habermas are moving beyond an exclusive emphasis on praxis. They stress the roles of pluralism, democratic discussion, liberal institutions, and a communicative ethics as conditions for the discovery of the meaning and truth of praxis. Gutiérrez does not take up the problems raised by current criticism and theoretical developments of Marxism. That may be explained by his particular context, audience, and intent. It does, however, make his stance of advocacy and defense insufficiently self-critical.

Strangely enough, the Ratzinger paper, describing liberation theology as running after the latest scientific theories, accuses it of having embraced the Marxism of the Frankfurt School, e.g., Adorno and Horkheimer, et al. Such a charge is incredible, if not ridiculous. The classic members of the Frankfurt School have been known not for their "scientific" approach but rather for their aestheticism and suspicion of scientific objectivity. What the Frankfurt School has developed amounts to a serious revision and critique of traditional Marxist categories of social analysis. Gutiérrez has certainly not adopted the thought of Habermas. If he had, he certainly would be less Marxist in his social analysis.

The final charge of sectarianism objects to the emphasis involved in the commitment to the poor and to justice as preconditions for understanding the Christian tradition. Yet it is important to locate Gutiérrez within classical theology. The classic theological tradition, exemplified by Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, emphasized two basic rules for interpreting Scripture: first, the love of God and fellow persons, and second, the rule of faith. Modern scholar-

ship disregards both when it advocates the neutrality and objectivity of the historical critical method. Liberation theology, cognizant of contemporary hermeneutical theory, takes up the Augustinian tradition when it stresses that love and justice are preconditions for correct understanding. Although liberation theology has been orthodox in its affirmation of traditional creedal tenets, its hermeneutic has not emphasized the Augustinian reference to the rule of faith,

but the self-transcendence of love and commitment. Fearing that a magisterium of the poor will replace the magisterium of the hierarchy, the Ratzinger document emphasizes the rule of faith and tradition. But the prince of the church, himself an Augustinian scholar, does not emphasize in his paper the other principle; that purgation and self-transcendence as entailed in the love for God and for other humans is a precondition for the correct interpretation of God's Word.

Modernism meets consumerism

THE ROMANCE OF COMMERCE AND CULTURE

James Sloan Allen

University of Chicago, \$27.50, 319 pp.

Richard Wightman Fox

WHAT can modern art possibly have to do with modern advertising? Modern art is high culture. It's abstract, rec-
ondite, for the initiated. Advertising is

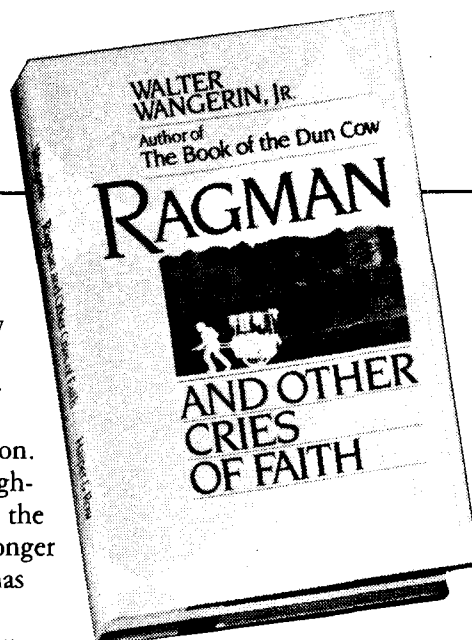
mass culture, lowbrow, kitsch, for every dumb cluck. Art is lofty inspiration, advertising is crass persuasion. But the major achievement of James Sloan Allen's *Romance of Commerce and Culture* is to show that the twain have met. In twentieth-century America businessmen of vision grasped what modern art had to offer them. Led by Walter Paepcke of the Container Corporation of America in the 1930s, they appropriated it as the most

New from the author of the award-winning BOOK OF THE DUN COW

Gifted author Walter Wangerin, Jr., interweaves short stories and parables, gritty realism and gentle fantasy with his own experiences as an inner-city pastor in a work of literary distinction and mature inspiration. The raw materials of life — laughter, tears, hope, fear, faith, and the many guises of love — "are no longer ordinary after this caring man has given them radiance."

—Robert McAfee Brown

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*Suggested consumer price

effective hidden persuader of all.

As early as the turn of the century, Allen notes, advertising theorists began to argue that the point of an ad was not to convey information about a product but to make a subtle, even subliminal, appeal to the self-image of the buyer. The goal was to link the consumer's needs, including his or her anxieties and self-doubts, to the therapeutic realm of goods. Listerine, with its invention of the social disease "halitosis," was only one of many companies, that instructed buyers to "suspect yourself first." Consumers were no longer considered reasonable shoppers making discriminating judgments, but wavering creatures subject to the confusing pressures of modern urban life. Their world was now beyond their own comprehension, in perpetual flux, a succession of fleeting images. Advertisers could capitalize on the disorientation by packaging a potent array of those images, organizing them to summon up an emotional response to a product.

Modernist graphic art was supremely suited to the task. Abstract poster art, developed in Europe in the 1920s by such artists as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and A. M. Cassandre, possessed a shock value that could hold the attention and stimulate the emotions. In its jarring juxtapositions and startling rearrangements of line, color, light, and shadow, modern graphics represented the modern experience of dislocation itself. It presented a world of everchanging fragments, a kaleidoscope of shifting images, the same world that Conrad, Kafka, and Mann were trying to capture in their fiction.

But once linked to the commercial marketplace, abstract art also presented a world of goods: commodities that simultaneously appeared to solve the problem of flux and yet continuously reopened it. Consumer articles were touted as solid, objective, real, as substantial answers to modern anxieties. Yet they were also implicitly identified as transitory, fleeting solutions. It was in the nature of commodities to become rapidly outdated — a welcome development for manufacturers and their salesmen. The educated consumer would now be one who grasped the relentless maelstrom of modern liv-

ing: to be stylish meant to stay informed, one step ahead, at the vanguard of consumption. The good consumer was the master of images — adept at building and rebuilding his or her own image out of the available pool of fragments.

Walter Paepcke of the Container Corporation of America was the first major executive to grasp the utility of modernist graphics. The story of his friendship with and support for Moholy-Nagy, who emigrated to Chicago when Nazism shut down the German Bauhaus, is a path-breaking case study in the twentieth-century rendezvous between commerce and culture. Paepcke realized that CCA could "sell itself not as a boxmaker only but as a designer and as the embodiment of good taste." The reputation of business had taken a nosedive in the Depression; visionaries like Paepcke devoted vast resources to refurbishing the corporate image. As purveyors of "culture," corporations stood above the battle; they transcended the conflict between mere interest groups like labor and capital.

The major problem with this book is the direct result of its primary virtue. Allen is the first writer to obtain access to the Paepcke family papers, and that privileged source allows him to document the fascinating Paepcke-Moholy-Nagy relationship. But once he is done with that tale one-fourth of the way into the book, he decides to follow the rest of Paepcke's life story instead of pursuing the connection between advertising and art. We want to know why Paepcke's

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perception about modernist graphics was not more widely shared in the business community. Were other businessmen dense, or did they perhaps realize that advertising could be "modern" while relying on kitsch art like Norman Rockwell's? There may be more than one way to capture the fleeting character of modern experience and invite the consumer onto the treadmill of the modern lifestyle. Commodities can be assembled out of old-fashioned as well as futuristic imagery; we can buy wall phones of fake wood with ornamental bells and cranks for the "country look."

But we also want to know whether consumers were in fact as passive as advertising theorists, and Allen, think they were, or whether they remained in any sense active agents in the realm of consumption. Allen is far too beholden to Stuart Ewen's *Captains of Consciousness*, which implies that twentieth-century capitalists and advertisers conspired successfully to reduce Americans to mindless automotons. "Manufacturers and their advertisers laid siege to the consumer mind," he tells us. No doubt some did. But that does not prove that they scampered over the ramparts without meeting any resistance. Allen should wonder whether we might grant the obvious centrality of advertising in modern American life and yet still hold that consumers remain rational human beings capable of discriminating judgment. An adequate view of advertising must do justice to the fact that people make such judgments both about products and ads themselves. They do ask "Where's the beef?" as Wendy's ad shrewdly suggested. They do laud commercials, like the now classic Miller Lite series, that subtly depict the contradictions of consumer culture. In the Miller ads former athletic celebrities reveal themselves to be human beings like us — worried about their own dwindling energies, buoyed up by the camaraderie of friends. Celebrity is an unstable realm. Miller shows us its ultimate unreality; these men must now make it on their own. Yet through the commercial itself they become celebrities again, at least temporarily. Marvelous Marv Thronberry, never much of a draw on the

field, becomes a mainstay of the lecture circuit for another season. The best advertisements do not just manipulate us; they help us explain our world.

The rest of the book takes up a variety of topics in American cultural history, especially the Great Books movement of Robert Maynard Hutchins and Mortimer Adler and the development of Aspen, Colorado, as a cultural haven. But these subjects are only loosely tied to each other and to the first part of the book. The only thing that links them is Paepcke's interest in them. Allen strains his argument to the breaking point when he tries to tell us that Hutchins and Moholy-Nagy were fundamentally engaged in the same enterprise because of their "historical, communal, and metaphysical yearnings." In fact, Hutchins never went through the modern experience of doubt that lay behind the German Bauhaus; he was a metaphysical absolutist for whom the medieval synthesis was normative. They may both have liked Paepcke and they may both have tried to sell culture to the masses, but their outlooks and historical roles were much more dissimilar than Allen thinks.

Ironically Allen does very little in the end to elucidate Paepcke's own outlook, the one perspective that might have tied

the book together. He does report that Paepcke was an intensely private man and that it was hard to know what he thought. But the account cries out for a reconstruction of Paepcke's stance. Implicit in Allen's data is an argument about Paepcke's paradigmatic place in twentieth-century life: the collector of precious minds as well as precious art, the consumer of any and all ideas as long as they are "great." Modern consumer culture is in part an arena in which great minds sell their image as lofty embodiments of inherited wisdom or advanced knowledge. Walter Paepcke and other well endowed philanthropists, only some of whom share Paepcke's commercial interest, bask in the reflected glow of intellectual and artistic celebrities. For his international Goethe Festival at Aspen in 1949 Paepcke purchased the services of Albert Schweitzer and Jose Ortega y Gasset for \$5000 each, Thornton Wilder for \$2500, and numerous lesser known academics for \$1000 each. To their credit T. S. Eliot, Arnold Toynbee, and George Bernard Shaw stayed home. Shaw replied that he refused to reduce Goethe to an object of conspicuous consumption. "Insects will buzz around the colossus, but not I. I take my hat off, and hold my tongue."

about it on Gesh, but don't let the strange name fool you. That scowling visage, never described, belongs in reality to Nick Nolte. Likewise, the redneck Lloyd Sapers is Warren Oates in overalls. And amiable Felix is the bearded Jeff Bridges.

The writing itself is chock-full of screen references. When Saper's 300-plus-pound mental-defective son goes berserk — a scene played for laughs by the way — Felix is reminded of the raging King Kong. One page later, surveying the damage, Felix feels "as if my life had somehow become confused with a Fellini movie." Next page, different context, he tosses out this: "I compared myself to . . . James Dean." Plainly, Boyle has Hollywood on the brain — Hollywood script deals, that is. Venal schemes aside, the above is buzz-name description, and all of us employ it in normal conversation. But what in speech amounts to a mildly lazy habit, in fiction looks positively slothful. It's a cheap little labor-saving device. Rather than build a situation step by step, you blithely drop a name, and the name does the job while you take five. "I was ogling Savoy's butt," says Felix, "with all the mendicant passion of a Charlie Chaplin, out at the elbows, pressing his nose to a plate-glass window rife with cream puffs and napoleons."

The constant name-dropping is part of a larger habit, almost an addiction: Boyle can't keep away from a simile. "Like the Savior at Golgotha, Vogelsang stayed three days"; "a target mounted . . . like an artist's easel"; "rusted machine parts . . . like the remnants of a forgotten civilization"; "clumps of mist . . . like balls of hair" — those are all from a single medium-sized paragraph, randomly selected. Boyle, not without literary scruples, is trying to soften the wham-bam crudities of his comic-strip plot. But he overdoes the fancy-talk by half.

As in all melodrama, action is everything here. We get, among other things, fistfights, friskings, and pukings, one night in jail, and several in a dive called Shirelle's Bum Steer. The protagonist battles fires and bears and a sleazy blackmailer. Yet none of it much qualifies as rip-roaring stuff. Early on, ap-

Pot potboiler

BUDDING PROSPECTS: A PASTORAL

T. Coraghessan Boyle
Viking, \$16.95, 333 pp.

Howard Kaplan

YOUR basic potboiler hero has dollar signs in his eyes; like the author, he's out to score big. Felix, thirty-one-year-old narrator of T.C. Boyle's *Budding Prospects*, fails in the end to make a million at marijuana farming. But happiness for him means more than a fat bankroll. An upstanding old hippie, he smiles as he sinks back to poverty-line limbo. Meanwhile there's plenty of sex and drugs and rock 'n' roll to ensure Boyle's success if not Felix's.

Beneath the hip California coating lies old-fashioned melodrama. One Officer

Jerpbak, a clean-cut cop, represents the stock villain. Mirror shades are his fearsome prop. He roughs people up for the fun of it. He cheats on his wife. (The good guys are slaving leches, too, but they at least are single.) Petra, a long-legged arts and crafts type, is the damsel in distress. Though she lays the priapic hero after proper introductions, her purity of heart is uncompromised: eventually, she says, she wants to have children. By book's end, faithful Felix is ready to accommodate her.

Boyle, his eye on the action not the players, rations out one or two traits per person. Of course having seen these folks before in the movies, we can fill in the details ourselves. Gesh, for instance, one of two sidekicks, is a big bull of a man with a snorting temper to match. That's

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ropos of nothing in particular, Gesh asks his buddies one night, "What's the closest you ever came to dying?" I perked up at this. Boyle's first book, *Descent of Man*, is a collection of weirdly inventive tales that read like sick jokes. The sky raining blood, no letup in sight — that's one of them. In another ("Heart of a Champion"), Lassie makes it with a coyote, leaving Timmy for dead under fallen timber. Unfortunately, those campfire stories requested by Gesh in *Budding Prospects* are nowhere near as inspired as these early efforts by Boyle. Nor, say, is Gesh and Felix's bar-prowling interlude in San Francisco. For this Boyle brazenly drags in the old sexy-woman-who-turns-out-to-be-a-man routine, a decrepit anecdote about which

Paul Theroux, in *The Great Railway Bazaar*, says, "I think I've heard that one before."

For would-be dope farmers and the naturally curious, *Budding Prospects* earns good marks as an elementary how-to. (The latest wrinkle, according to my Santa Cruz friend, is planting on out-of-the-way, publicly owned lands.) Boyle patiently takes us from sowing to reaping to rolling and smoking, with play-by-play commentary provided by Dowst, a Yalie botany whiz. But the novel is strictly cautionary, the outlook anti-El Dorado. Between predators both man and beast, natural disasters and narcs, the marijuana business sounds risky at best. You're much better off writing pulp like this.

Emmanuelle saw a little boy pick up a rotten tomato and tried to keep him from eating it; his mother laughed. "He's used to it," she said. The baby she was holding was covered with flies.

Sister Emmanuelle moved into a refurbished goats' shed. During her years with the ragpickers she managed to build a school, a vocational center, medical facilities, and recreational fields. She was particularly concerned with the plight of the women, and taught them family-planning methods (though she didn't accept the suggestion that she should sponsor a government clinic, since that might involve sterilization, and she drew the line at that).

Some of Sister Emmanuelle's most frustrating experiences involved her work with women, and some of the most excruciating passages in *To Share With God's Poor* deal with their often terrifying condition: here is the story of a young girl smothered to death to protect the family honor (she was a Christian who had fallen in love with a Muslim). Wife-beating is common, and the husband is the undisputed ruler of his house, often a tyrannical one.

But there is much more to this book than tales of woe. From a strictly literary point of view a reader could find things to complain about. Sister Emmanuelle's story of her work and its meaning jumps here and there, and the feistiness which bore such a great fruit in getting schools and vocational centers built can be off-putting on the page. That doesn't matter: you don't judge a book of this sort in the ordinary way. This isn't a great book; it is something more important, a profoundly good book, by a woman of radiant courage and generosity. Her respect and deep love for the people she serves (and for their religions, Coptic Orthodoxy and Islam) permeate her writing. As awesome as her own compassion is, Sister Emmanuelle shows us something even more remarkable: the love and generosity and compassion which can be found in the lives of the poorest and most abject. People who have almost nothing share what little they have; people who have reason to hate, forgive. This is the heart of the Gospel, and we must be grateful to Sister Emmanuelle (who at age seventy-

Generosity on the dungheap

TO SHARE WITH GOD'S POOR

Sister Emmanuelle

Harper & Row, \$5.95, 176 pp.

John Garvey

SISTER EMMANUELLE Cinquin is a Belgian member of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion. She comes from a comfortable background: her father was a lingerie exporter in Brussels. She studied literature at the Sorbonne, and for about thirty years after joining her order she taught in rather comfortable circumstances. She was in her sixties when she

visited Cairo in 1971 and encountered the *zabbaleen*.

The *zabbaleen* are the garbage collectors of Cairo. *Zabbal* means dung; they pick it up. The Cairo ragpickers live on rubbish mounds and sort through what they collect from the wealthy homes of Cairo, recycling what can be recycled, feeding the edible scraps of food to domestic animals, and the best of the refuse to children. Flies, infection, and disease are everywhere. The infant mortality rate is a staggering forty percent. On her first visit to the ragpickers Sister

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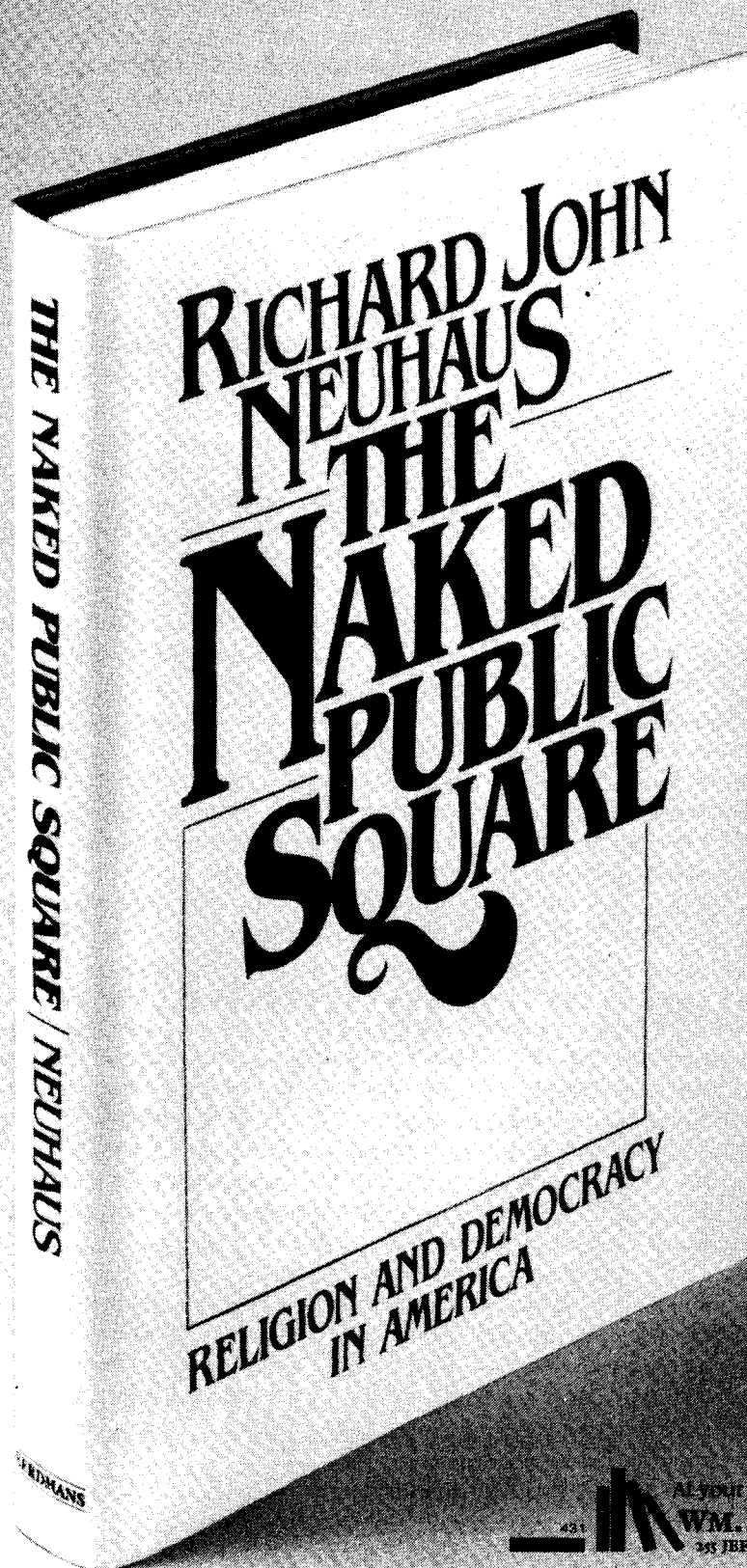
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five is still hard at work) for being part of its revealing.

In Brief

AIMÉ CÉSAIRE: THE COLLECTED POETRY, by Aimé Césaire, translated by Clayton Eshleman and Annette Smith. California, \$25, 416 pp.

Two of France's legacies to its former colonies were the privileged position of the writer and the French language as a literary vehicle. France, the only nation to be governed (however briefly) by a poet, Lamartine, gave independence to Senegal under a poet, Senghor; now one of its overseas territories, Martinique, has a regional assembly presided over by Aimé Césaire, who along with Senghor, developed the notion of *négritude*.

Césaire is a rich, complex poet, much more difficult to understand and translate than the romantic Lamartine (it is curious that both writers wrote plays about Haiti, Lamartine about Toussaint l'Ouverture, Césaire about Christophe). Césaire's peculiar fusion of symbolism, surrealism, the unique linguistic and experiential qualities of the Caribbean, and the African heritage make him a highly intellectual as well as an emotive poet. The introduction to the book summarizes these influences; a longer, less dense essay might have been in order.

The translators have acquitted themselves well of a difficult task. To explain (not just to translate or transliterate) the profusion of neologisms and references to local flora and fauna would have required a multi-volume critical edition. The translation is literal rather than poetic, although occasionally the translators don't choose the obvious word for reasons that are not clear.

At the very least, this attractive bilingual edition will demonstrate the force behind Césaire's poetry and indicate why French literature since the Second World War has become increasingly colonized by the writers of former French colonies. The great writers of the French language no longer all live near a metro station.

STEVEN PHILIP KRAMER

Correspondence

(Continued from page 354)

you headlined "Cry with the Mother." It's good to read a comment on this cruelly polarized issue without wanting to say, "Yes, but . . ."

Ms. Shea expresses much of what I, too, feel — like Aesop's bat between the hawks and the doves of abortion.

In the anger that seems to fuel so much advocacy of "life" or of "choice," I often sense an almost Catharist distaste for the untidy ambiguity of femaleness.

George Steiner wrote somewhere that "we hate most" the purveyors of a failed utopia. He referred to Judaism, but there's no utopia so total as the womb. And it is Mommy who provides it, then violently expels us (sooner or later, viable or not) from that lovely "secret sea." We find it hard to forgive her.

MARY LOUISE BIRMINGHAM

Words, words

Barstow, California

To the Editors: While celebrating the inherent magic of words with John Garvey [Feb. 10], I'd also like to look at their darker side, from my view.

Growing older, I've dreaded the time when words might become adequate. I fear life slipping away into verbalism, fear that words will be accepted as alternatives for life. I'm afraid that one day life will no longer come down as a great cascade, a torrent, the symbols of words almost helplessly floating on its tide. It should be a relentless élan . . . a holy raging too great for the bondage of words, disdainful even of conceptualization; or am I only saying that life should always be young?

I first realized this when I was fighting words one night in order to embody my emotional experience. "Words! Lousy words," I said. These pale awkward things were trying to extend my passions and become their contour. I had the uncomfortable feeling that they were part of decrepitude, like false teeth and bifocals.

Could it be that the vitality of life and its verbalization are in an inverse relation?

RUSS COLE

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Seminar

IVAN ILLICH: TOWARD A HISTORY OF SCARCITY — Late 12th Century Roots Seminar, Lectures, July 23, 25, 27. Carol Young, University of Maine, Augusta ME 04330.

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Dear Readers,

Twice a year, *Commonweal* prints the names of those who generously support the magazine as Commonweal Associates. Those who have renewed their memberships in the first part of 1984 are listed below. A cumulative list for the year will appear in the first issue of 1985.

Even as we write this note, the list of Associates is growing longer—in response to our recent fund-raising appeal. Many other readers may have read

that letter and seriously considered adding their measure to the essential help provided by the Associates. We urge them to take this opportunity to mail in their membership.

In January, we look forward to many new names. For the moment, we want to express our heartfelt thanks to all the stalwart supporters who have kept *Commonweal* alive and growing over so many years. To their generosity and loyalty, both the staff and the readership owe a profound debt.

The Editors

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